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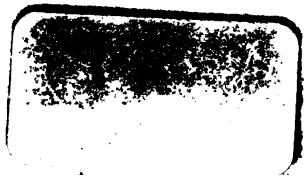

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Penn

J. K. Hodges
1805.

THE

POLICY AND INTEREST

OF

Great Britain,

WITH RESPECT TO

M A L T A.

BWC
P

1. Malta—Hist., 1798–1815.

THE

POLICY AND INTEREST

OF

GREAT BRITAIN,

WITH RESPECT TO

MALTA,

SUMMARILY CONSIDERED.

by Granville

"HANC IGITUR OCCASIONEM OBLATAM TENETE, per deos immortales! patres conscripti, et amplissimi orbis terræ consilii principes vos esse aliquando recordamini. Signum date populo *Anglicano* consilium vestrum non deesse reipublicæ, quoniam ille virtutem suam non defuturam esse profitetur. Nihil est quod moneam vos; nemo est tam stultus qui non intelligat, SI INDORMIERIMUS HUIC TEMPORI, non modo crudelem, superbamque dominationem nobis, sed ignominiosam etiam et flagitiosam ese ferendam."

CICERO, *Philipp.* iii. 34.

LONDON:

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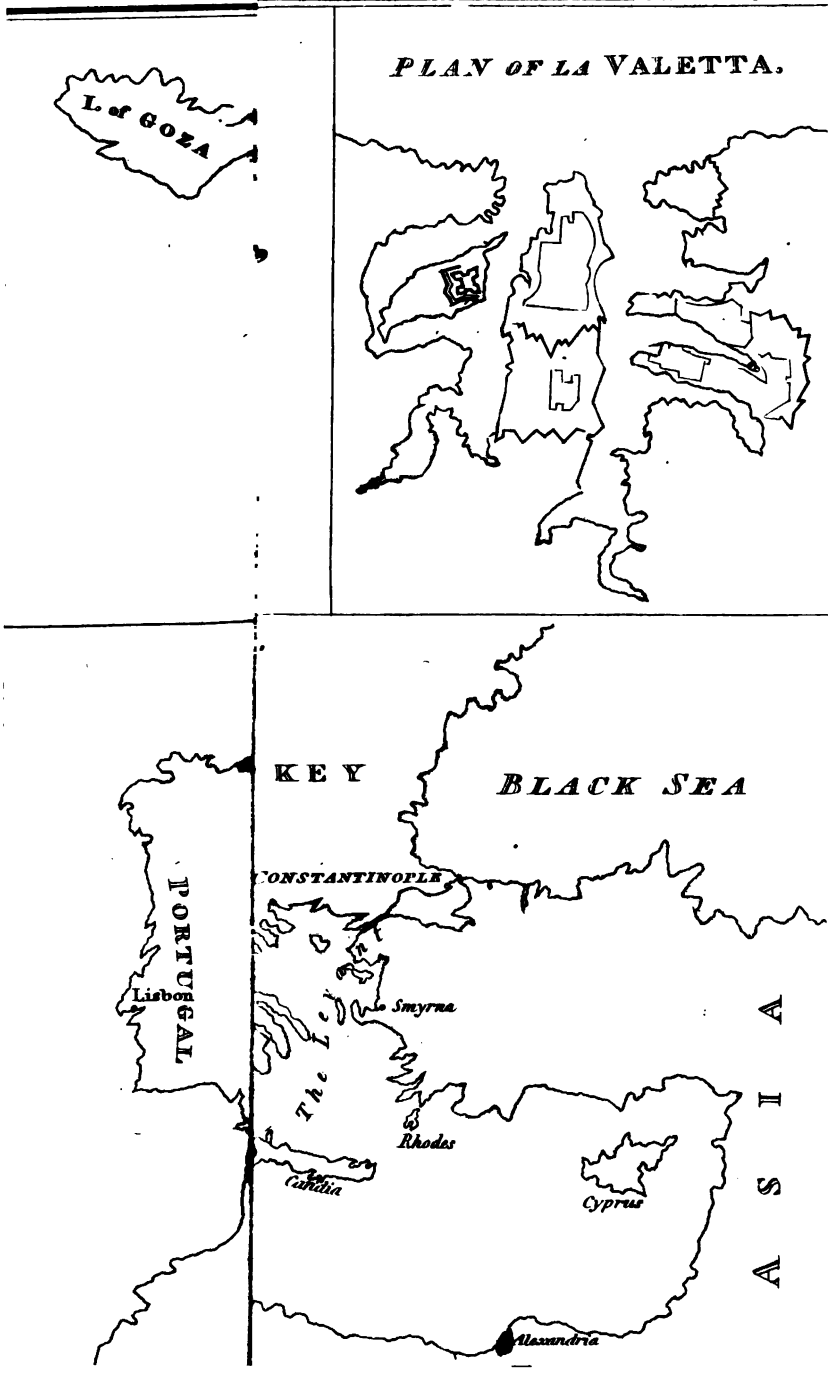
PLAN OF LA VALETTA.
I. of GOZA
KEY
BLACK SEA
CONSTANTINOPLE
PORTUGAL
Lisbon
Smyrna
The Ly
Rhodes
Candia
Cyprus
ASIA
Alexandria

THE

POLICY AND INTEREST

OF

Great Britain,

WITH RESPECT TO

MALTA.

OF the several foreign dependencies of the Crown of this United Kingdom, few have been so much an object of the pride and attachment of the nation, as the Fortress of Gibraltar. Its position at the entrance of the Mediterranean Sea, its proximity to the southern ports of Spain and France, its extraordinary natural strength, and, lastly, the exploits by which it was acquired, these circumstances have rivetted the affections of the British people to a rock, which, considered in itself, and with-

out those references, is entitled to no higher estimation than any other of the barren eminences that protrude themselves above the sea in all parts of its extended surface.

But it is from external relations that every object of worth derives its value; and those relations have, in all ages, rendered Gibraltar a territory of the greatest importance to the powers that have successively possessed it.

During the struggles that harassed Spain for so long a period previous to the final expulsion of the Moors, the Fortress and Port of Gibraltar were regarded by the possessor as affording the greatest advantages, either as a point for collecting and assembling an invading force, or as a secure and impregnable retreat.

After Spain had expelled the Moors, and when the whole of that country became at length united under one crown, Gibraltar was accounted her principal bulwark against the return of that enemy; and we therefore

fore find it occasionally described by the Spanish writers as *the eye of the kingdom*, "el ojo del reyno;" and, *the key and bulwark of its empire*; "la llave y baluarte de su imperio." And ever since the splendid achievement which, in the year 1704, wrested that fortress from Spain, and thereby procured for Great Britain a station from whence she might watch and control the French and Spanish power, and the navigation of the Streights, the efforts made by the court of Madrid, in war and treaty, to recover that important territory, and the uniform failure of those efforts, demonstrate the value which each party has, respectively, attached to it.

The result of the memorable siege of 1783, when the united power of Spain and France was foiled by the pertinacious valour of General Elliot, seems to have laid the question of the re-conquest of Gibraltar at rest, at least for some time; and Great Britain, by the secure footing she has thus

established for herself upon the south of the continent of Europe, appears in effect to have advanced her own frontier to the shores of the Mediterranean.

Strong, however, as the public feeling now is, upon the subject of Gibraltar, and just, as is now the public estimation of its political importance, it required the experience of some little time to convince the nation of that truth; for, when the intelligence of its reduction first reached England, many, even statesmen and soldiers, were unapprized of its value; in the body of the nation it excited a sentiment of disappointment inclining to discontent, because other conquests had not been preferably achieved.

But the courts of Vienna and Madrid, thoroughly aware of all its consequence, and clearly foreseeing the formidable accession of political weight and power that must necessarily accrue to Great Britain from the possession of a naval fortress in the south

south of Europe, exerted every faculty of negotiation to induce the British Government to relinquish it; and indeed such seems to have been, at one time, the success of their endeavours, that the court of London appears to have been drawn into something like a secret promise to restore it, under certain conditions, to the Spanish crown.

Fortunately however for England, before that measure could be carried into execution, truth had worked its full effect upon the public mind at home; and observation, reflexion, and experience having brought the nation to a just and thorough conviction of the importance of the new dependancy, and the public opinion upon that interesting point having been distinctly expressed, the representations and remonstrances of the foreign courts lost all their effect.

Thus foiled in their object, Spain and Austria at length resorted to direct menace and

and reproach: reproach against the government, for not fulfilling the alleged promise to evacuate and restore Gibraltar, and menace to the country, if restitution were not immediately made.

The King, in his speech from the throne in the year 1727, acquainted the Parliament, "That the secret alliances between Spain and the Emperor had laid the foundations of a most exorbitant and formidable power, and were so directly levelled against the most valuable and darling interests and privileges of this nation, that we must determine either tamely to submit to the peremptory and unjust demands of the King of Spain, in giving up Gibraltar, or must resolve to be in a condition to do ourselves justice, and to defend our undoubted rights. That the King of Spain had ordered his minister residing here to depart immediately from the country, leaving a memorial that was little short of a declaration of war, wherein he again demands

mands and insists upon the restitution of Gibraltar."

The effect of that communication upon the public feeling, in Parliament and in the country, was such as the threats of foreign powers have in all ages been accustomed to produce amongst us; that is to say, an universal sentiment of indignation and resentment, and a general and vigorous resolution to maintain our just rights and honours, in defiance of the loftiest adversary.

During the debates that took place in Parliament upon the subject of this occurrence, the promise to relinquish Gibraltar was urged against the ministry, and with considerable vehemence, by some members, as constituting an insuperable obstacle to the measure of retaining that fortress, which appeared by the speech from the throne to be now the determination of the government. It was upon that occasion that the great minister, Sir Robert Walpole, made the following memorable declaration

declaration in his place in the House of Commons: "That such a promise not having been made while he had the honour to be in the administration, he could say nothing to it: that if such a promise was ever made, he durst aver that *it was conditional*, and made *void and invalid* by the King of Spain refusing to comply with *the conditions on which it was made*; and that, whenever the performance of that promise was mentioned to him, he always delivered it as *his fixed and positive opinion, that* GIBRALTAR COULD NOT BE GIVEN UP, WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF PARLIAMENT *."

Thus terminated the attempts of the enemy to inveigle us out of Gibraltar, leaving us an invaluable example of the effects of firmness and resolute perseverance; for although that fortress was not formally ceded to us by treaty until the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, yet it has remained in-

* Tindal. Chandler. Coxe.

variably

variably in our possession from the period of its reduction, in 1704; so that it is now exactly *one century* that the permanent establishment of a British garrison in the Mediterranean has inspired confidence and courage into the enemies of France, and given perplexity and annoyance to the enemies of Great Britain.

Mr. Anderson, in his History of Commerce, thus records this glorious and important achievement:

"The year 1704 (says he) was marked by two great pieces of good fortune—the victory of Blenheim, and the taking of the most important Fortress and Port of Gibraltar; both which gave a most marvelous turn to public affairs all over Europe, and particularly to England's hopes and public credit. Gibraltar having been confirmed to Great Britain by the Peace of Utrecht, has proved of very signal advantage to us, as it is not only a bridle on most of the Christian states with whom we may be at war,

war, but also a sure station for our ships of war, a safe retreat in war for our merchant ships, a refreshing place for both, and a curb on the piratical states *."

By this conquest Great Britain attained that great and essential object of her policy, a place of arms, harbour, and magazines in the Mediterranean; an object rendered indispensable, by the then alarming growth of the power of France and Spain, in order that the influence and power of Great Britain might be at hand to check the progress of the usurpations continually projecting by one or other of those powers, and thus be enabled to vindicate and maintain that *balance* which has ever been the fundamental principle of her foreign policy.

But the evidence that was thus afforded of the advantages accruing to Great Britain from the possession of a naval fortress

* Anderson's Hist. of Com. vol. ii. p. 242.

in

in the Streights, served at the same time to prove, to those who more attentively considered the subject, the necessity of her obtaining a similar station more to the eastward in that sea, together with a port in which a squadron might lie with security in all seasons of the year; an advantage which Gibraltar did not possess. For it was manifest, that the particular interest of England, combined with the general interest which the European states must ever have in maintaining an equilibrium of their several powers, rendered it of importance that Great Britain should possess a permanent naval station wherever France had sea ports, and consequently, that she should acquire a commodious position for her navy within the Mediterranean; in order that, as the harbours and naval arsenals of France lie equally to the ocean and the Mediterranean, the fleets of England might command in both those seas correspond-

ing

ing and equal advantages, for their security, equipment, or refit.

So early as the year 1707, that is to say, only three years after the conquest of Gibraltar, we find this obvious principle urged in a tract entitled, "*An Enquiry into the Causes of our Naval Miscarriages; with some Thoughts on the Interest of this Nation as to a Naval War, &c.*" In this tract, the ingenious author thus discourses:

"We have had it in our power, by a right management of our fleet, to reduce our common enemy, France.—It is therefore strange, that when our attempt upon Cales miscarried, we did not immediately sail up the Streights, and take possession of Port Mahon in Minorca, and make it a harbour for our fleet, a magazine for our naval stores, for careening and refitting our men of war, as we did in the reign of King Charles II. during our war against Algiers. Had we possessed Port Mahon, and

and kept a fleet there superior to the French, it would naturally have had the following consequences:—

"We might have prevented sending troops to Italy by sea.—

"We should have ruined the trade of Marseilles, and not only have secured, but considerably advanced, our own trade in the Mediterranean.—

"When the rovers of Barbary had once found us masters of those seas, they must have given over their piracies, and applied to a fair way of trading; by which we should have enlarged our trade to Barbary, to our great advantage.

"By being masters of Port Mahon, we should naturally become guarantees of all treaties betwixt the Turks and any Christian nation; for the Turks, seeing us sovereigns of those seas, would never find it their interest to break treaties. The French first acquired their reputation at the Ottoman Porte, by pretending to be sovereigns of the

the Mediterranean; but since the Turks have been partly undeceived, by seeing us masters of the sea in *the summer season*, the French have sunk at least one half at the Ottoman Court; which clearly proves *they must have sunk entirely, had we kept a fleet* ALL THE YEAR *in the Streights**."

The principle here contended for was so manifestly reasonable and just, and has since established itself with such powerful evidence, that in all our latter wars the Island of Minorca has been a primary object of our attack; and according to the posture we have maintained at the conclusion of those wars, we have either been enabled to strengthen our interests by retaining that island, or have been compelled to weaken them by giving it up.

And yet, the Island of Minorca, whenever we have possessed it, has been an object of considerable solicitude to us, from

* Harl. Miscellany.

its

its demanding the application of a strong and constant force, no less naval than land, to guard against the consequences of a surprize; to which it is always liable from its vicinity to the harbours of our natural enemies, and of which we received such disastrous proof in the year 1756, when it was suddenly wrested from us, before we were well convinced at home that the enemy was seriously arming at Toulon.

This exposed condition of the shores of Minorca, and the impossibility of ensuring the safety of Port Mahon against a powerful and sudden attack, without thus devoting a large squadron of men of war to its defence, lessens considerably the advantages which Great Britain might otherwise derive from the use of its excellent harbour, the productions of its soil, and the good disposition of its inhabitants. And the question of possession or restitution, constantly recurring at the conclusion of each succeeding war, prevents the establishing

blishing of any fixed system of relations between Great Britain and that island.

But the fortunes of the late war, by a concurrence of causes the most unexpected and astonishing, have put Great Britain in absolute possession of another island; a rock, indeed, but which, placed in the very centre, and almost in the narrowest channel, of the Mediterranean; possessing a port in which the British navy might moor, and presenting a coast impregnable, if but moderately defended, by any assault; guarding the whole of the Levant, and effectually controlling the naval movements of France on the east, in that sea, is—whether we consider it with relation to the political interests of Europe, or with relation to our own naval and commercial interests, or with respect to its own local circumstances—absolutely singular and *one*, upon the surface of the globe. This island, this rock, is MALTA.

By the fourth article of the Preliminary Treaty

Treaty of 1801, it had been stipulated, generally, that this extraordinary fortress should be restored to the order of St. John of Jerusalem, and should be placed under the guaranty of some third power. But this article having, according to appearance, been deemed by the contracting powers too general, it became restricted by the tenth article of the Definitive Treaty of the following year; and certain conditions were then annexed, which were to regulate the time and the circumstances of the restitution. Obstacles, however, unforeseen and uncontrolable by Great Britain, having arisen to prevent the fulfilment of those conditions at the precise period expected, a delay in the execution of the article was the inevitable consequence; and it then became necessary for the contracting parties to consent to wait, with temper and mutual forbearance, and even to re-consider the article, and to devise some means for supplying its defects, should

it in the end be found to be inexecutable.

But the petulance and arrogance of the French government would hear of no delay. Any defect that might be found in the article was only to be supplied by the unconditional compliance of Great Britain with the mandate of France, requiring the immediate evacuation of Malta; and as the ambassador of Spain, in the year 1726, threw out to England the menace of war if Gibraltar were not immediately restored,* so Buonaparte, with no less insolence and injustice, threatened Great Britain with war, if Malta were not immediately evacuated.†

The effect of menace, in both these instances, was the same: and since the vio-

* See pages 6 and 7.

† "The alternative presented by the French Government to his Majesty, in language the most peremptory and menacing, was *the evacuation of Malta or the renewal of war.*" His Majesty's Declaration against France.

lence

lence of Buonaparte has thrown Europe back into war, before any supplemental measure could be devised for evacuating Malta according to the true spirit and intention of the Treaty of Amiens, the engagements of that treaty are become cancelled and annulled. Great Britain now retains Malta by the tenure under which she held it during the late war; and we are placed, in respect of that island, in a position very similar to that in which our fathers stood with regard to Gibraltar in the year 1727, when "the *conditional promise*" to relinquish it was "*made void and invalid*" by the non-fulfilment of "*the conditions on which it was made;*" and when Sir Robert Walpole, as the minister of this country, solemnly delivered his opinion, founded upon a view of the circumstances of the enemy and of the extreme importance of that fortress to the security of the British interests, that "*Gibraltar could not be given up without the consent of Parliament.*"

We are therefore unexpectedly brought, by the progress of events, to the following enquiry: How do the policy and interest of Great Britain direct her, at the present day, to act, with respect to Malta?

And I hold it no temerity to affirm, that a cautious, enlightened, and adequate consideration of this great question will produce an answer, comprehending the following propositions; viz.

1. That it is indispensably necessary that Great Britain should employ the most efficacious means that she can devise, to guard against the possibility of France ever again acquiring possession of Malta.

2. That, consistently with that object, and in necessary course to its attainment, it is indispensable that Great Britain should establish the permanent presence of her power at some secure, and *insular*, position, within the Mediterranean.

3. That the most simple and convenient, and at the same time the only certain and effectual,

effectual, mode of attaining both these ends, is, that Great Britain should remain in possession of Malta.

We owe to France this important service, that, by having annulled all the engagements of the late treaty respecting Malta, she has replaced us upon our original ground; and has thereby procured for us the inestimable privilege of being able to reconsider the question of Malta, and to avail ourselves of the reiterated demonstrations of perfidy and criminal ambition, which her impatient thirst for dominion disclosed, during, and subsequently to, the negotiation of that treaty.

In doing this, it will be incumbent upon us to examine, with the utmost care and attention, the peculiar circumstances of Malta, and the dispositions uniformly entertained towards it by the governments of France; and to scrutinize its various capacities, either for enabling France to inflict

injury

injury upon Great Britain, or for empowering Great Britain to curb, and effectually control, the turbulence of France.

Those capacities were at all times well known to France, and had been profoundly calculated by her government, even at a time when few in this country had cast a thought upon that island. How various and contradictory the opinions in England were upon the subject of its importance, even as late as the discussions that took place upon the Peace, was manifest in the debates in Parliament, in which great statesmen and great commanders were at variance upon the question of its value as a naval fortress. But the interval of time that has since elapsed, and the fruits of time, experience, and reflexion, have worked a signal change in the public opinion; and since the public mind has been brought to dwell upon the subject, a general and uniform conviction has prevailed of the importance of Malta to this country.

It

It is not to be wondered at if, when the question was first agitated, and for some short time after, the body of the nation were backward to believe, that so small and rude a rock could be rendered, all at once, of such primary importance in a conflict, by which the existence of the greatest states of Europe was more or less affected; or could reasonably become a ground for prolonging a quarrel, which might otherwise be brought to subside, and which had already kept the whole Christian world in blood and terror for ten long years. And this backwardness of belief would naturally be increased by reflecting, that in all preceding wars in which England had been engaged, the island, nay, the name, of Malta, had never once been implicated; and they would thence be induced to suspect, that it was only now brought forward and insisted on with a view to favour some political end.

Nevertheless, the importance of Malta, and

and its capacities for the greatest and most serious purposes, have at all times been, really, such as has been alleged. During the foregoing ages, that importance and those capacities had been, in a manner, locked up, and removed by the peculiar circumstances of the island from the scenes of European warfare. Had that not been the case, we can with confidence aver, that the rock of Malta, far from not having been implicated in the wars between England and France, would alone have considerably multiplied the conflicts between those powers. But the lawless and guilty policy of France at length broke, and has now for ever dissolved, the charm, by which Malta was so long, and in so extraordinary a manner, set apart from the field of political contention. That amazing influence, under which the most valuable and formidable fortress upon the globe had preserved the reverence, instead of awakening the ambition, of conquerors—that influence

has

has been extinguished by the hand of France;—it is extinguished for ever! and the nature of man, and of human policy, concur in rendering it morally impossible, that the Island of Malta can ever be again *neutralized,* or replaced in the innoxious state in which it formerly stood towards the powers and states of Europe. Malta, situated by nature within the reach of France, but beyond the action of our common guardianship and protection, has at length been violated by France; who has thus tasted of possession, and has thereby acquired proof of the facility with which she can appropriate the advantages which that remarkable island is capable of rendering her, in her inveterate, unwavering, and continually increasing solicitude for the destruction of this country.*

That

* The invasion of Malta is thus represented in an Epigram, adapted to the genius of a people frivolous and vain in the midst of dangers and blood, and published

That such is the point of view in which the government of France regards Malta, is too manifest, and the evidence too ample and notorious, to call for much illustration.

In the old schemes of France, in which the conquest of Egypt was conceived, with a final view to the destruction of the great commercial power in rivality with her, and to the extension of her own dominion in the East, the occupation of Malta was an essential and leading circumstance *. When,

lished in Egypt within six weeks after the catastrophe of their fleet off Aboukir:

SUR LA PRISE DE MALTE.

Malte *jusqu' ici pucelle*
Ne trouvoit point de vainqueur,
BUONAPARTE voit la fleur,
Se présente devant elle;
Au héros sitôt la belle
Rend les armes et son cœur.
Cent fois gloire à sa valeur!
De flêchir une cruelle
Aux Français est dû l'honneur.

Courier de l'Egypte, No. 3.

* See a tract entitled, "A Summary Account of the Contents of Liebnitz's Memoir, addressed to Lewis XIV. recommending to that Monarch the Conquest of Egypt, as conducive to the establishing a supreme Authority over the Governments of Europe." Hatchard.

therefore,

therefore, the republic finally proceeded to carry into effect the projects of the monarchy, which the latter had never found itself able to accomplish, the invasion of Malta became the first object of the armament charged with the execution of the general plan.

Previous to the departure of that armament from France, no intimation whatever was afforded that could at all tend to unravel the mystery of the enterprize. The only communication made to the forces, was that which *Buonaparte himself* delivered to them at the moment of their embarkation; but this, though strongly marked with the character of mystery that covered the whole of the proceeding, is abundantly sufficient for the admonition of Great Britain:—"Soldiers! You are going to undertake a "conquest, the effects of which, upon "commerce and civilization will be incalculable. You will give *the* ENGLISH

"*a most*

" *a most sensible blow, which will be followed*
" *up with* THEIR DESTRUCTION * !"

On the 10th of June the armament arrived off Malta; on the 11th the island was invested; and (let England lay it well to heart) on the 18th the French flag was flying upon Valetta, and that formidable fortress was in the power of a French garrison.

The sentiments conceived by Buonaparte at this event are not left to our conjecture; the exultation he testified is upon official record. In the letter which he immediately dispatched to the Directory, " I have not neglected any thing (says he)
" that could insure to us this island.—No-
" thing can equal the importance of this
" place.—We *at length* possess, in the centre
" of the Mediterranean, the strongest post
" in Europe, and it shall cost dear to those
" who shall dislodge us †."

* Intercepted Letters, vol. i. p. 237.

† Piéces Officielles de l'Armée d'Egypte, &c. 1re *partie*, p. 10, 12.

Such

Such were his feelings in regard of Malta at that successful moment; and such they have ever continued to be, under the defeat and disappointments that have succeeded. And although, on a later occasion,

> " Artificer of fraud !———
> Yet not enough had practis'd to deceive
> England once warn'd——"

we find him aukwardly attempting to assume a contemptuous carriage towards that island, and affecting, that a point of honour alone induced him to waste so much concern upon a " *wretched rock;*"—" *un miserable rocher* * ;" yet at another moment, when too much disturbed to suppress his thoughts or command his feelings, we find him, with all the inconsistency and perturbation of conscious fraud, declaring to the English Ambassador, in a conference, that he would more contentedly see a British army at the gates of Paris, than a British garrison in Malta. And here he

* Papers relative to the Discussion with France, No. 67, *inclosure.*

disclosed

disclosed his real sentiments; for a British army at the gates of Paris might be successfully opposed by the armies of France; whereas he knew, and felt, that a British garrison upon the rock of Malta implied a British fleet and naval arsenal within the Mediterranean; and these indicated a species of force, from the control of which it would be impossible for him to extricate himself, so as to be able to assume that posture of mischief, which is the ultimate end and object of all his policy. And it is a coincidence to be well noted by us, that the conference in which he made this disclosure, was the very same in which his frenetic insolence avowed the confident anticipations he entertained, of recovering possession of Egypt *.

After the French army had entered Egypt as conquerors, but when the lustre of that success was suddenly overcast by the destruction of their fleet upon the Egyptian coast, it became necessary to

* Discussion with France, &c. No. 38.

administer

administer some immediate remedy to the gloom and despondency which that disaster naturally created. Buonaparte was too intimately acquainted with the genius of the people he governed, to be at any loss in regard of the remedy he should apply. To inflate their vanity, to exalt their levity, and to enflame their enthusiasm, were the means to which he resorted; and being already provided with the engine of the press to aid him on all similar occasions, he employed it without delay for the purpose of diverting their attention from their naval calamity to the successes of their army, and more especially to the final object of their enterprize, the attainment of which was already so far advanced by the *combined conquests of Malta and Egypt*. In this view it became necessary for him to impress upon the general body a strong and lively sense of the importance of Malta and Egypt to France; and in order to effect this, without the appearance of contrivance

or design, a fabricated letter was inserted in his Egyptian newspaper entitled the *Courier de l'Egypte* (his *Moniteur* of that day) purporting to have been discovered upon the person of a shipwrecked Englishman: thus putting into an English mouth the statement, which he was anxious to propagate throughout his army.

The following is a translation of that letter, and of the paragraph by which it is introduced:

'TUNIS.

'An English frigate having approached 'too near the coast, struck and foundered. 'Part of the crew perished; the rest were 'picked up by a Maltese vessel, and carried 'prisoners to Malta. Upon one of the 'crew was found a letter addressed to a 'member of the House of Commons, of 'which the following is a translation:

"Our fleet has certainly gained a vic-"tory, from which our navy has derived "all the glory it can acquire, but which

"does

" does not therefore improve the critical " position in which our country stands.

" The sovereignty of the seas had been " irrevocably obtained by the capture of " Toulon, and by the victories that have " distinguished our cruizers during the first " years of the war. We are therefore mas- " ters of the Mediterranean, after the battle " of *Abou-Qyr*, as we were before it; but " we shall be under the necessity of main- " taining a fleet in those distant seas, no " less after the battle of *Abou-Qyr* than we " did before, if we design to block or ob- " struct the intercourse between the new " establishments of the French, who have " still *thirteen ships* to oppose to us in these " seas. We have killed from 600 to 700 " of their men, and they have killed about " as many of ours; we took 2,500 of them " prisoners, which we have been under the " necessity of restoring; we have likewise " taken from them *three ships*, which we " may *bring to London* :—*que nous pourrons*

" *mener à Londres*—we have already so
" many!—*nous en avons déja tant!*

" But the conquest of MALTA, which the
" French have achieved, insures to France
" the domination of all the Mediterranean.
" *Mais la conquête de Malte, que les Fran-*
" *çais viennent de faire, assure à la France*
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therefore,

therefore, the republic finally proceeded to carry into effect the projects of the monarchy, which the latter had never found itself able to accomplish, the invasion of Malta became the first object of the armament charged with the execution of the general plan.

Previous to the departure of that armament from France, no intimation whatever was afforded that could at all tend to unravel the mystery of the enterprize. The only communication made to the forces, was that which *Buonaparte himself* delivered to them at the moment of their embarkation; but this, though strongly marked with the character of mystery that covered the whole of the proceeding, is abundantly sufficient for the admonition of Great Britain:—"Sol-"diers! You are going to undertake a "conquest, the effects of which, upon "commerce and civilization will be in-"calculable. You will give *the* ENGLISH

"*a most*

" *a most sensible blow, which will be followed*
" *up with* THEIR DESTRUCTION * !"

On the 10th of June the armament arrived off Malta; on the 11th the island was invested; and (let England lay it well to heart) on the 13th the French flag was flying upon Valetta, and that formidable fortress was in the power of a French garrison.

The sentiments conceived by Buonaparte at this event are not left to our conjecture; the exultation he testified is upon official record. In the letter which he immediately dispatched to the Directory, " I have not neglected any thing (says he) " that could insure to us this island.—No- " thing can equal the importance of this " place.—We *at length* possess, in the centre " of the Mediterranean, the strongest post " in Europe, and it shall cost dear to those " who shall dislodge us †."

* Intercepted Letters, vol. i. p. 237.

† Piéces Officielles de l'Armée d'Egypte, &c. 1re *partie*, p. 10, 12.

Such

Such were his feelings in regard of Malta at that successful moment; and such they have ever continued to be, under the defeat and disappointments that have succeeded. And although, on a later occasion,

> "Artificer of fraud!———
> Yet not enough had practis'd to deceive
> England once warn'd——"

we find him aukwardly attempting to assume a contemptuous carriage towards that island, and affecting, that a point of honour alone induced him to waste so much concern upon a "*wretched rock;*"—"*un miserable rocher** ;" yet at another moment, when too much disturbed to suppress his thoughts or command his feelings, we find him, with all the inconsistency and perturbation of conscious fraud, declaring to the English Ambassador, in a conference, that he would more contentedly see a British army at the gates of Paris, than a British garrison in Malta. And here he

* Papers relative to the Discussion with France, No. 67, *inclosure.*

disclosed

disclosed his real sentiments; for a British army at the gates of Paris might be successfully opposed by the armies of France; whereas he knew, and felt, that a British garrison upon the rock of Malta implied a British fleet and naval arsenal within the Mediterranean; and these indicated a species of force, from the control of which it would be impossible for him to extricate himself, so as to be able to assume that posture of mischief, which is the ultimate end and object of all his policy. And it is a coincidence to be well noted by us, that the conference in which he made this disclosure, was the very same in which his frenetic insolence avowed the confident anticipations he entertained, of recovering possession of Egypt *.

After the French army had entered Egypt as conquerors, but when the lustre of that success was suddenly overcast by the destruction of their fleet upon the Egyptian coast, it became necessary to

* Discussion with France, &c. No. 38.

administer

administer some immediate remedy to the gloom and despondency which that disaster naturally created. Buonaparte was too intimately acquainted with the genius of the people he governed, to be at any loss in regard of the remedy he should apply. To inflate their vanity, to exalt their levity, and to enflame their enthusiasm, were the means to which he resorted; and being already provided with the engine of the press to aid him on all similar occasions, he employed it without delay for the purpose of diverting their attention from their naval calamity to the successes of their army, and more especially to the final object of their enterprize, the attainment of which was already so far advanced by the *combined conquests of Malta and Egypt*. In this view it became necessary for him to impress upon the general body a strong and lively sense of the importance of Malta and Egypt to France; and in order to effect this, without the appearance of contrivance

or design, a fabricated letter was inserted in his Egyptian newspaper entitled the *Courier de l'Egypte* (his *Moniteur* of that day) purporting to have been discovered upon the person of a shipwrecked Englishman: thus putting into an English mouth the statement, which he was anxious to propagate throughout his army.

The following is a translation of that letter, and of the paragraph by which it is introduced:

'TUNIS.

'An English frigate having approached 'too near the coast, struck and foundered. 'Part of the crew perished; the rest were 'picked up by a Maltese vessel, and carried 'prisoners to Malta. Upon one of the 'crew was found a letter addressed to a 'member of the House of Commons, of 'which the following is a translation:

"Our fleet has certainly gained a vic-"tory, from which our navy has derived "all the glory it can acquire, but which

"does

" does not therefore improve the critical
" position in which our country stands.

" The sovereignty of the seas had been
" irrevocably obtained by the capture of
" Toulon, and by the victories that have
" distinguished our cruizers during the first
" years of the war. We are therefore mas-
" ters of the Mediterranean, after the battle
" of *Abou-Qyr*, as we were before it; but
" we shall be under the necessity of main-
" taining a fleet in those distant seas, no
" less after the battle of *Abou-Qyr* than we
" did before, if we design to block or ob-
" struct the intercourse between the new
" establishments of the French, who have
" still *thirteen ships* to oppose to us in these
" seas. We have killed from 600 to 700
" of their men, and they have killed about
" as many of ours; we took 2,500 of them
" prisoners, which we have been under the
" necessity of restoring; we have likewise
" taken from them *three ships*, which we
" may *bring to London* :—*que nous pourrons*

" *mener à Londres*—we have already so
" many!—*nous en avons déja tant!*

" But the conquest of MALTA, which the
" French have achieved, insures to France
" the domination of all the Mediterranean.
" *Mais la conquête de Malte, que les Fran-*
" *çais viennent de faire, assure à la France*
" *la domination de toute la Mediterranée.*
" This inappreciable acquisition alone is
" equivalent to THIRTY SHIPS OF WAR.—
" *Cette inappréciable acquisition vaut seule*
" TRENTE VAISSEAUX DE GUERRE.—

" And then, the conquest of Egypt!—*Et*
" *la conquête de l'Egypte!* A good English-
" man cannot reflect with indifference upon
" its fatal consequences. What! does this
" centre of the world, then, really belong
" to the French? Shall the rice and corn
" that feed the Archipelago and the whole
" of the Ottoman empire, and the hemp
" that supplies its fleets, be for ever in the
" power of our enemy? They will possess
" singly more sugar and indigo than all our
islands,

" islands, collectively, can produce. All " the coffee, the gums, in short all the " trade of Arabia and the Red Sea, is now " exclusively their own. Who is able to " calculate the effects which this superb " possession may occasion upon the state " of the whole world!

" Thus, the French commerce will pro- " ceed from Marseilles and Ancona, by the " way of Malta and Corfu, to Damietta " and Alexandria. Never did a colony " offer such extensive advantages! Never " did any country combine so many in- " terests; interests political and military, " of trade and of subsistence. It is " now, indeed, that the Mediterranean " Sea is become *a lake of France:*— " *C'est bien vraiment actuellement que la* " *Mediterranée est devenue un* LAC FRAN- " ÇAIS!

" Was it then in order to arrive at this " great result that they concluded the peace " of Campo Formio? Is it for this that

" they attach so much importance to the
" possession of Corfu; and that they are
" so careful to maintain relations with the
" pachas of the Morea and Albania?

" Egypt is irreversibly in the power of
" the French, who in fifty days may re-
" ceive an answer to their dispatches to
" India. They will thus revive the hopes
" of their friends; they will increase the
" discontent of our enemies; and they will
" draw all the commerce to themselves, by
" the port of Suez. But what do I say:
" Who can pronounce where they may
" be at the present moment? Why may
" not that army that traversed the
" Julian and the Noric Alps (a course
" hitherto unknown to modern story) in
" order to throw themselves into the heart
" of Germany—why may it not perform
" that which was performed by the Mace-
" donians and the Romans? And if only
" the shadow of that army, hitherto un-
" conquered, could arrive there, what will

" be

" be the fate of the English power? It will " *have been !—Que de viendrait la puissance* " *Anglaise—elle auroit été* *."

It is unnecessary to enter into any critical discussion in order to exculpate the English name from having any concern in this ostentatious display of Buonaparte's achievements. We do not " *bring our ships to London,*" nor adopt the French pedantry in the orthography of eastern names; neither do we describe the triumphs of France, nor anticipate the downfal of England, with the enthusiasm and raptures of a Frenchman. We can have no difficulty, therefore, in referring this article to its source.

There is another passage, in the 9th number of the same paper, that may be seasonably produced here: it is the conclusion of a memoir entitled " *Notices sur l'Isle de*

* Courier de l'Egypte, No. 4.

Malte,"

Malte," which had been conducted through several of the preceding numbers, and which was evidently inserted with the same intent as the fabricated letter from Tunis.

"There are few places in Europe (says "the writer) so strong or so carefully forti- "fied as Malta. This island possesses the "finest and the securest port in the Medi- "terranean. It affords a safe, convenient, "and agreeable place of refreshment for all "ships going to, or returning from, the "Levant.

"The possession of Malta (continues "this writer) insures to France a prepon- "derance in the Levant trade. Every "state at war with the Power in possession "of this island, must renounce that com- "merce, or must consent to maintain a "powerful fleet to cruize for its protection; "and even then, those means will not al- "ways prove sufficient. So that the pos- "session of Malta would, *in all ages*, have "been highly valuable to France; but it is

"still

" still more so to the Republic, engaged as
" she is in such a contest *. The Maltese,
" considered now as French, will serve on
" board our fleets, will apply themselves to
" privateering, and will thus do an infinite
" mischief to the trade of the English, who
" must now be looking out for great re-
" turns from the Levant. Our intercourse,
" also, with the islands heretofore belong-
" ing to Venice is secured; for if Malta
" had fallen into the hands of the Russians,
" the English, or the Austrians (each of
" which powers severally coveted it), the
" advantages which those islands offer
" would have been lost to France. To
" conclude, *Malta is the Cape of Good Hope*
" *of the Mediterranean*:—MALTE, *enfin,*
" *est le Cap de Bonne-Espérance de la Mé-*
" *diterranée.*

To these unequivocal evidences of Buo-

* This argument applies equally to every shape of revolutionary government in France, whether *republican* or *imperial.*

naparte's

naparte's feelings upon the subject of Malta, I shall add another, demonstrative of the opinions entertained in France upon the same subject; by comparing all of which, the reader will be enabled to form some judgment, how deep a root the speculations of the French upon Malta have taken.

The author of a treatise entitled "*Recherches Historiques et Politiques sur Malte,*" concludes his dissertation with a chapter, professing to shew, *the advantages that France will derive from the conquest of Malta.*

"I cannot better close this work (says "he) than by setting forth the immense "advantages that will accrue to France "from the conquest of Malta. It is, "without dispute, one of the strongest "fortified places in Europe, nature and "art having concurred to render it such. "I do not exaggerate, when I affirm, that, "suitably defended, it is impregnable. "Nature, by supplying Malta with com-

"modious

" modious harbours, and assigning to it its
" happy position, appears to have des-
" tined it to become the *key of the Levant*,
" and the *arbitress of the Mediterranean*.

" It is only requisite to open the chart
" of Malta, to be sensible of the truth of
" what is here advanced; we shall there
" perceive, that this island, placed in the
" centre of the Mediterranean, commands
" the navigation of the two channels that
" separate it from the opposite continents;
" that it constitutes a point of rendezvous
" for all vessels trading with the Levant;
" that it contains a secure and capacious
" port, capable of receiving the largest
" ships; lastly, that it is so situated, that
" a few vessels cruizing towards Sicily on
" the east, and towards the coast of Bar-
" bary on the west, would suffice for cutting
" off all communication with the Levant.

" It was therefore with some reason that
" the representative of the people, Duvi-
" guet,

" guet, entitled Malta *l'Isle Dominatrice*,
" and that he extolled its superb ramparts,
" and the security of its port; and that the
" elder Eschassèreaux pronounced it to be
" *one of the strongest bulwarks of the Medi-*
" *terranean*, and *one of the most important*
" *for the trade of France*. Nay, some have
" even gone so far as to call it, *the Cape*
" *of Good Hope of the Mediterranean*, and
" *the very* THRONE *of that sea*.

" Independently of all these advantages,
" France, by becoming mistress of Malta,
" will gain a nursery of brave and skilful
" seamen. The Maltese, in consequence
" of their inhabiting a small territory, sur-
" rounded by water, regard the sea as, in
" a manner, their natural element; and the
" greater part of these islanders are ad-
" dicted to navigation from their earliest
" infancy. United, therefore, to France,
" they will serve on board our fleets, and
" will considerably annoy the English.

" France

" France will be able to form extensive " dock-yards in Malta; to complete the " basin undertaken by the Grand Master, " Rohan, and to excavate another. The " proximity of the forests of Albania, and " the low price of labour, will greatly fa- " vour ship-building, and enable us to con- " duct it upon a system of much greater " economy than at Toulon. And, as soon as " industry shall have revived in Malta, the " republic will be empowered to derive " important financial advantages from con- " tributions and duties:—*par le moyen des* " *contributions et des douanes.*

" Lastly, by taking possession of Malta, " France has prevented that important " place from falling into the hands of the " English or the Russians, who for some " time past have exerted every method in " their power to render themselves masters " of it; in which event, France would " have lost for ever the trade of the Le- " vant,

"vant, of Barbary, and of the Mediterra-
"nean *.

"But the Executive Directory of the
"Great nation has overturned all the plans
"and speculations of those two powers;
"and by taking possession of Malta, has
"saved the commerce of France. It has
"thus rendered the republic *the umpire of*
"*the Mediterranean:—l'arbitre de la Medi-*
"*terranée*—and the mistress of the com-
"merce of the Levant and Barbary.

"Frenchmen! this measure, like so many
"others, ought to be regarded by you as
"a demonstrative proof that the Executive
"Directory has no other object in its view
"than the good, the glory, the firm esta-
"blishment of the republic, and the wel-
"fare of the French people. For it was

* The author here subjoins the following note: "To
"be able to form an idea of the extent of the French
"commerce in these countries, it will be necessary to
"read the valuable work of the Citizen *Arnaud*, entitled,
"*De la Balance du Commerce de la France.*"

"*in*

" *in the Luxembourg* that the conquest of " Malta was achieved; it would else have " been impossible, in the short space of " twenty-four hours, to have carried a for- " tress almost impregnable. In fact, Malta " had already surrendered, before General " Buonaparte had even landed his artil- " lery :—*C'est au Luxembourg que s'est faite* " *la conquête de Malte.* L'on n'a pu en " 24 heures, emporter une place pres " qu'imprenable. Malte s'est rendue avant " même que le Général Buonaparte eût " fait déscendre son artillerie *."

These express testimonies, added to so many others that the recital of these must recal to the memory of the reader, establish, upon the most solid ground that reason can require in order to conviction, the fact, that the politics of France comprehend in their essence the eventual re-occupation of

* Recherches, &c. p. 99—110.

Egypt,

Egypt, and of Malta, as conducive to that end, and as alone capable of conferring security and stability upon her tenure of that country.

I shall take this opportunity to remark, that, in order to be intimately and sensibly convinced of the magnitude of the mischief that would result from the French re-establishing themselves in Malta, we ought not to content ourselves with contemplating that island from our native station in Great Britain. To give increased force and effect to the object, we ought to impress on our minds, that England is now a great *Asiatic Power*, one of the most considerable of that continent, and of those most deeply interested in its concerns; and we ought, therefore, to transport ourselves, in thought, into our Indian empire, and to review Malta *from thence*. That extraordinary island will then appear to us to be placed as an advanced fortress, fortified for the express purpose of shielding and protecting the

Eastern

Eastern World, and primarily Egypt, the gate and vestibule of that world, against the irruption of an enemy, whose naval inferiority incapacitating him from effecting his hostile purposes by the circuitous navigation of the Cape, leaves him no other prospect for his success than the chance of being able to throw by degrees into Egypt such a force, as shall enable him, in the sequel, to open again the intercourse with India by the channel of the Red Sea.

Considered in this point of view, and with reference to this important function, Malta rises to our imaginations in all its consequence and pre-eminence; and we then plainly see it to be a powerful advanced guard, established for the common security; and, at the same time, a most formidable battery, that our good destiny has enabled us to *turn against the French.* For as, in former ages, it was devoted to the purpose of defending the western nations against the incursions of the *Ottomans of the East*, so,

in

in the present age, it is become, in the hands of Great Britain, a necessary, and the only guard, to screen the eastern world, in which we have so considerable a stake, from the inroads and depredations of the *Ottomans of the West;* who now threaten a wider waste of desolation, than the Turkish power was at any period able to effect.

From all that has here been said, I presume the reader is prepared to admit without hesitation the validity of the two propositions, viz. 1st, *That it is indispensably necessary, that Great Britain should employ the most efficacious means that she can devise to guard against the possibility of France ever again acquiring possession of Malta:* and,

2dly, *That, in consistency with that object, and in necessary course to its attainment, it is likewise indispensable, that Great Britain should establish the permanent presence of her power at some secure, and insular, position within the Mediterranean.*

And if he admits both of these, it will require

require but little of argument to induce him to admit the third and remaining proposition, viz. *That the most simple and convenient, and at the same time the only certain and effectual, mode of attaining both those objects is, that Great Britain should remain in possession of Malta.*

That the position within the Mediterranean, at which Great Britain is called upon to establish the permanent presence of her power, ought to be an *insular* one, is too plain to reason to require proof. Our commanding power is *naval*; upon that we are to depend for the defence of the great interests now under consideration; and it is therefore necessary, that the position we may occupy should be insulated and comprehended by that element, upon which alone that power can unfold itself for action. The isthmus that connects Gibraltar with Spain, deducts from the strength and security of that fortress. It is not, therefore, merely a *sea-port*, but *an*

 island,

island, possessing a secure and capacious sea-port, that the crisis of Europe demands for Great Britain.

Now, when it is alleged, that the "*only certain and effectual*" mode of attaining the ends expressed in the two first propositions, is, for Great Britain to remain in possession of Malta, this allegation is founded upon the consideration of the facts; 1st, That there is no island in that sea (had we the privilege of choice amongst them all) that can enable us to afford a positive and certain protection to Egypt and the Levant, excepting Malta (which we actually possess:) 2dly, That Great Britain cannot provide any adequate security, with respect to the future and *final* destination of Malta, were she to consent to place it out of her own safeguard and custody. These are serious and important facts, and meriting all the attention that we can bestow upon them.

It

It is indeed possible, that, partially considered, every one of the islands adverted to may possess some distinct and particular advantage superior to the same in Malta; but such a consideration would betray a narrow and ignorant view of a large and comprehensive question. We are not to confine our views to naval objects alone, nor to military, nor to commercial; but we are to unite all of these, and then to submit them to the paramount rule of political combination; and certainly, with a reference so wide, there is not one of all the neighbouring islands that is qualified to sustain a comparison with Malta.

Let us take a cursory survey of all those that may come within the scope of the present argument; and which may be reduced to the following, viz. Minorca, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Lampedosa, and Corfu.

Of Minorca it is unnecessary to offer any observation, after what has been already

said: the impossibility of rendering Port Mahon defensible against a vigorous surprise, and therefore the necessity of affording it the constant protection of a fleet, sufficiently demonstrates its inferiority to Malta as a fortress.

With respect to the Island of Corsica, the experiment has already been made; and it is to be presumed that it will not be repeated.

It is to be further presumed, that the experiment of Corsica will serve for Sardinia. For if we were harassed out of Corsica, when we were separated from our enemy by the Gulphs of Genoa and Lyons, we ought not, in reason, to expect a more peaceful or secure tenure of Sardinia, when he shall only have to traverse the narrow Streights of Bonifacio, which separate, and barely separate, Sardinia from Corsica.

If Sardinia has more ports, or more natural productions, than Malta, it has, on the other hand, considerably more points

to

to defend; and will therefore need an army for its protection, when a moderate garrison will insure the safety of Malta. It is impossible it can ever establish that confidence of security, which constitutes the peculiar character of Malta; and the army in Sardinia must therefore be continually under arms, while the garrison in Malta may repose peaceably in their quarters. Neither would it turn the argument in favour of Sardinia, if, in a naval point of view, it should be stated, generally, to be a better station than Malta for watching the port of Toulon. Because, our urgent political necessities do not so much demand, generally, a station for watching the French ports, as, *specifically*, a position for covering and guarding *Egypt and the Levant*, and from which we may at all times be able speedily to frustrate the design of any armament directed against those parts; and whether Sardinia or Malta can best contribute towards the attainment of that object,

object, I leave to the reader to pronounce.

If now we come to Sicily, the embarrassments that we have noticed in Sardinia will here be found increased both in number and in force. An extensive surface of country, and extended lines of coast; a numerous and active population, and the menacing proximity of the continental shores; these circumstances prove, that in attempting the arduous labour of appropriating, governing, and securing the Kingdom of Sicily, we should infinitely exceed the proportion of our wants; and the surplus of anxiety and care that we should thereby incur, would oppress and distract all our future operations, instead of leaving us free to prosecute the final, and only important, purpose for which we seek an insular position in the east of the Mediterranean.

The little island of Lampedosa, although I have admitted it into the present argument in consequence of its having been noticed

noticed in the last conferences at Paris*, is really not entitled to any consideration in a comparison in which Malta is under examination as *a naval fortress;* whatever may be its properties in other respects. As a farm, for example, to supply corn and cattle for the Maltese market, it might be rendered of value; but, since it possesses no port that could afford shelter to a squadron of men of war (which is the most essential point in the present speculation) it cannot properly come within the design of the present argument.

There only remains for consideration the island of Corfu. This island, on account of its natural strength, and the excellence of its port, bears the nearest affinity to Malta. Nevertheless, if we had the mortification of seeing it deserted by Russia, we could never be induced to regard it as in any manner an equivalent for Malta to Great Britain. It is, for the

* Papers relative to the discussion with France, Nos. 61, 62, & 70, *incl.* 2.

protection

protection of the Adriatic, what Malta is for the protection of the Levant. But it is the Levant that *we* are principally interested to protect; and we therefore see with satisfaction the charge of protecting the Adriatic undertaken by Russia. For the purposes of Great Britain, therefore, the situation of Corfu is defective, inasmuch as it lies out of the tract that we are so much concerned to watch. And the contiguity of Corfu to the main land of Greece; the common interests of the Greek nation, of which the people of Corfu are a part; the common prospects of liberation and union to which they all eventually look; the restless activity of the Greek character; —all these circumstances sufficiently forewarn Great Britain of the perpetual anxiety and irritation to which she would become subjected, should she ever attempt to exercise a permanent government over that people.

But with regard to Malta (which exactly

supplies,

supplies, without exceeding, the measure of our wants), the case is totally and altogether different. Insulated in race from all their neighbours, as their rock from either continent, the people of Malta hold no common concern with any other nation; they maintain no external relation with any other power; all their thoughts and views are concentred at home; and they have no other desire but to enjoy that home with reasonable freedom and peace. Over such a people, Great Britain might rule for ever, with tranquillity and satisfaction, and at the same time avail herself of all the local advantages that their wonderful country possesses; which,—like an enormous vessel, riding at her anchor, and moored with consummate skill in mid-channel of the Mediterranean; occupying exclusively the post of importance, and presenting her sides and ordnance against every assailant;—rests secure in her own stupendous strength; and imposes no constraint

straint on the operations of the squadrons that take shelter in her harbours.

And can we ever part with the custody of such a post, and venture to persuade ourselves, that we may reasonably feel secure concerning its *final* destiny? When demonstration stares us in the face, that the perseverance of France is determinately bent upon recovering Malta,

> " ———— by *force* or *fraud*,
> weening to prosper ———— "

can we allow ourselves to entertain a doubt, whether one or other of those means may not again prove successful? Will the most ordinary prudence justify us, to our country or our posterity, in confiding to any other power, however amicable, the office of preserving it from relapsing into the hands of France, when we ourselves are so amply competent to discharge that office; and when, moreover, we are aware, that *the fortunes and the dispositions of the most friendly powers are alike mutable by nature*, whereas,

whereas, Great Britain's interest in the matter is *immutable and perpetual?* The negative to all these questions is the voice of wisdom and of truth.

The interest we are considering is strictly a *British interest;* and who can be so fit and competent a guardian of the British interests, as Great Britain herself? A minor state, indeed, may sue to a principal power, to preserve for her and defend that which the sense of her own weakness and insufficiency may render her fearful to undertake; but whose guardianship shall a ruling and an umpire nation solicit, when the very circumstances that constitute her a ruling and an umpire nation, points her out to be the safest guardian to which the care of her own interests can be confided? And since, (as has been remarked) the fortunes and the dispositions of the most friendly power are equally mutable by nature, and since the fortunes of Malta must of necessity follow the rule of the changes that

that may befal the power to which it should be confided; the course that wisdom, and a provident policy, prescribe to us to follow, is, to unite and identify the fortunes of Malta with those of England.

Since, therefore, it is manifest, that Great Britain must inevitably withdraw the foundations of the security she now holds by possessing Malta, the very instant she shall withdraw her custody from it, and shall place it out of her own immediate safeguard and protection, it is equally manifest, that "the *only certain and effectual* mode" by which she can confirm and perpetuate that security, is by retaining Malta in her own possession; and so far our third proposition is made good.

But, besides being the "*only certain and effectual*" it is further alleged to be, the "*most simple and convenient* mode."

In alleging the *simplicity* and *convenience* with which, as a political measure, Malta may be retained by Great Britain,

I mean

I mean to affirm, that there is no arrangement that can be devised for attaining the important points from the prosecution of which, it is to be hoped, Great Britain will now *not recede*, by which so little displacement of right can be occasioned, so little humiliation imposed upon any state or power, as by the simple measure of continuing to retain our actual possession of Malta: a consideration which ought to afford us the highest consolation, in the present shattered condition of Europe.

When we insisted upon retaining Gibraltar, and when we demanded of Spain to relinquish her right to that territory and to confirm the sovereignty of Great Britain over it, the sacrifice, and the wound, to which we required her to submit, was unquestionably the most humiliating and afflicting. That ancient and illustrious monarchy was called upon—not to alienate a distant territory, not to sacrifice, as the price of peace, some foreign dependency,

but

but — to amputate a portion of *herself*, and to transfer that portion to her ancient enemy and rival; she was required to consign to that rival the most important and valuable fortress of her land, "*the eye of her kingdom, and the bulwark of its empire;*" and to implant into her own soil the representative of a foreign crown, there to remain the perpetual monument of her humiliation. Yet all this was effected, at the imperious instancy of national security; and who is the man that would have justified the minister of that day had he neglected to accomplish it?

Similar humiliation must attend our appropriation of the islands of Minorca, Sardinia, or Sicily. For our insecure (and therefore unavailing,) tenure of the former, we should impose a sacrifice upon the Spanish crown, which, added to that of Gibraltar, has always oppressed its dignity, and angered its friendship.

In

In annexing Sardinia or Sicily to the British dominions, we should, in either case, extinguish a kingdom; and thus fill up the measure of degradation and insult, that France has been long heaping upon those persecuted crowns.

But, with respect to Malta, nothing of this nature can result from our determining to retain it, and to confirm our title over it; because, 1st, the sovereign that might have been alleged to suffer humiliation by the transfer of Malta to the British crown, *has ceased to exist;* and because, 2dly, every principle that can produce a title over Malta, unites to establish the *prior title of Great Britain to the dominion of that island.*

That sovereign was the ancient order of Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem; which order, towards the middle of the 16th century, acquired in their *corporate* capacity the *Sovereignty* of Malta, by investiture from the Emperor Charles V., who,

who, by his act of cession, bearing date the 24th of March, 1530, conveyed to "*the Grand Master, Convent, and Religion*" of the order, the islands of Malta and Gozo; constituting them, in their *corporate unity*, the *Seigneur*, or Sovereign, over those islands.

This numerous, and once well-compacted society, had evinced an heroical spirit, and had given signal proofs of its efficiency and power, so long as it retained its primitive energy and vigour; but those active principles began to discover symptoms of exhausture, within a century after the establishment of the body in Malta; and it had lingered in a course of continually increasing decrepitude and decay, when, amidst the recent convulsions of the world, it suddenly attained the period of its dissolution. By that dissolution, that conventual sovereign has lost its entity; there is no longer any such sovereign in existence; and whatever fragments may remain to continue the memorial of the

the *Order of Knights Hospitallers*, the *corporate Sovereign of Malta* is absolutely dissolved and extinguished.

That body was originally compounded of *eight* parts, which were denominated *languages*, or *tongues*, because they severally consisted of individuals belonging to the nations from which their respective parts were designated. Of these eight parts, 1-8th was *English*, 3-8ths *French*, 2-8ths *Spanish*, 1-8th *Italian*, and 1-8th *German*. They possessed considerable estates in their respective countries; the revenues arising from which empowered them, under favour of their peculiar system (of amity with all Christian states, and enmity only with the Mahometan), to maintain, for a long period of time, a considerable degree of dignity, of vigour, and of independence. But at length, about the middle of the 16th century, a breach took place in the integrity of the body, by the cessation of the English part or tongue; in

consequence of which, the body became reduced thenceforward in the proportion of 1-8th. Thus it continued to subsist, until the late commotions of the world that accompanied the Revolution in France, when 3-8th parts were further reduced by the cessation of the French, and 1-8th by that of the Italian tongue. Since then, further changes have been introduced into the constitution of the Spanish tongues, which have so far corrupted and depraved that constituent portion of the body, as to have further dissolved the 2-8th parts of which those tongues consisted; so that of the eight original essential parts of that body, there now only remains 1-8th, or the German part; and thus, the fact of *dissolution* is rendered susceptible of demonstration, no less to the senses than to the understanding. In every point of view in which it can be considered, it is become politically and naturally extinct; nor can all the old and young gentlemen wearing the

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In fact, the sovereignty of the order in Malta was a political circumstance of that nature, that although Great Britain would not have disturbed it had it continued to subsist, yet, being ended, she can never consent to recal it into life. Had it survived, she would not have contested its title or possession; on the contrary, she would have manifested a feeling concern for its superannuation, and recalling to her mind the exploits of its youth, would have respected its old age, and have left its decrepid frame to attain the proximate term

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* Under favour of this discrimination, I can venture to advert to the innovations that have been introduced into the structure of the order, by the creation of some more recent *tongues*, or *priories*. These modern and adventitious parts can only be considered as relating to *the order of knighthood*, not to the *Sovereignty of Malta*. That the Sovereignty of Malta was to follow the rule of every innovation which the Knights of St. John might choose to adopt, in the distribution of the honours of their order, cannot be maintained; and it is a position too fruitful of consequences to be hastily conceded.

view is more confined, the imagination is prohibited from interposing, and we are constrained to contemplate it with the severity of truth; since its pretensions can appeal to no other tribunal than that, which awards its judgments according to the rigid law of nature and of nations.

Considered with reference to the principles upon which that law is founded, convincing arguments will not fail to suggest themselves, why that sovereignty, being actually dissolved, ought not to be revived. In truth, if we contemplate the body politic of Malta, under the regimen of the order, we shall plainly discern it to have been a *political lusus* or *monstrum;* as much in contradiction with the fundamental principles of civil government, as every *lusus* of nature is in contradiction with her established laws and constitution. On this account it is impossible to apply to the body politic of Malta, under that regimen, any definition of a state, any description of

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It was from not sufficiently attending to this fact that so much incongruous matter was urged, by hasty advocates for the prerogatives of the order, at the conclusion of the late peace. They argued from superficial glances, and visionary assumptions, but never looked the subject steadily in the face. If they had, they could not have failed to have regarded the original sovereignty of the order over Malta, as a memorable and instructive example of the folly of endeavouring to govern in perpetuity

tuity the contingencies of future ages, by the peculiar mood and transient character of one age;—a folly not less in degree and quality, than to attempt to deduce a perpetual effect from a temporary and limited cause. Like the contrivances of some young mechanics, who have imagined that they have discovered the principle of a perpetual motion; but not taking into their calculation the original external impulse which they had given to their machines, and attributing their movements wholly to the supposed inward principle, when the effect of the original impulse has ceased, their machinery has only served to retard a little the cessation of the action, which has presently followed; just so it has proved with the political machine set up in Malta by Charles V. The spirit of heroic action and romantic honour which accompanied the order into Malta, served, like an external impulse, to give to that machine, for some time, a vigorous and exact movement. But

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that movement began to grow imperfect, as soon as that spirit began to waste; and when at length it was entirely exhausted, and the machine left to the operation of its own inward political principles, the sluggish and irregular vacillations which it exhibited, evinced how soon its action must have ceased, had it not been violently broken up by France.

The first and immediate effect of the dissolution of the corporate Sovereignty of the order over Malta, is to give enlargement to a body of valuable rights, which Great Britain is bound, by *the duty of conquest*, to respect and to secure; and which had long been kept out of view, by the forward pretensions of that multitudinous Sovereign. These are the rights of the Maltese people, who constitute a population of about one hundred thousand souls; rights which have already been virtually recognized by Great Britain, in the late peace; in vindication of which it had been

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devised, in restoring the government of the order, to ingraft into that government a portion of the Maltese nation; as the only possible method of providing (under that regimen) something like a representative interest for the Maltese, in the supreme council of foreigners that was again to rule their country.

This measure was, avowedly, founded upon the just pretensions of the Maltese themselves, and upon the obligation of honour binding His Majesty's Crown to afford them protection. In the note addressed by Lord Hawkesbury to the Vice Chancellor of Russia, Count A. Woronzow, his Lordship, by his Majesty's command, expressly adverts to "the attention which "a regard for the honour of his Crown ren-"ders due to the interests and wishes of the "Maltese *." And, in his Lordship's dispatch to the British Ambassador at St. Pe-

* See Papers presented to Parliament, May 27, 1803.

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tersburgh transmitting that note, and dated Jan. 29, 1803, his Majesty's instructions, relative to "the stipulations in favour of the Maltese inhabitants," contain these words:

"It is important that your Excellency "should impress the Russian government "with the conviction of the services ren- "dered by the inhabitants of Malta to his "Majesty and to the common cause, at the "time when the French were in possession "of the island. That for nearly two years "they maintained a state of constant and "active hostility against the French. That "several thousands of them perished in "this state of hostility; and that these "efforts were made at a time when they "could receive assistance from no other "foreign power. That the attachment "evinced by the Maltese to his Majesty "during the blockade, and their loyalty to "him since he has obtained possession of "the island, give them a peculiar claim to "his protection."

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This *peculiar claim*, superadded to their general claim derived from the most solid and sacred principles of public right, give to the Maltese people a perfect title to *efficient* protection from the British power.

I am well aware of the general delicacy of any argument bearing upon the principle of abstract right, in this age of revolutionary politics and licentious sophistry; but the present subject is safe from either of those issues; and, resting upon plain and just principles, can only lead us into that broad and strait course of enquiry, in which we, as a people, are accustomed to discover, and to expose to view, our own just rights and privileges.

And I cannot devise a more fair and less invidious, and at the same time, a more comprehensive manner, in which to represent the nature of the change that the Maltese people underwent, in relation to their government, by the arrival of the sovereign host that came to invest their little

little island, than by adducing the words of the celebrated Bosio, the historian of the order, who has left upon record the following remarkable (but inadvertent) statement:

"We must not omit (says he) that, on the 29th day of August, in the year 1529, the Grand Master arrived with his suite in the Port of Malta, for the purpose of observing, and privately inspecting, the situation and appearance of the island. But he would not permit *any one* to land; not deeming it becoming that they should place themselves under the authority of *those who then governed the country, but who were presently to become their subjects.*"

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In fact, before Malta was consigned to the order, the Maltese, though subject to the Crown of Sicily, administered the affairs of their own island under a native magistrate, whom they styled *Capitano*. Their privileges had been continually increasing, and acquiring additional strength, through the favour, or, more properly, through the justice and gratitude of their ancient Sovereigns. One memorable circumstance of their history is too directly connected with the present argument to be omitted here. During the agitations of the 14th and 15th centuries, the fluctuting fortunes of the princes who wore the crown of Sicily had constrained them, from time to time, to alienate their island of Malta, upon mortgage, to different nobles

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of their court; but these alienations occasioned such vicissitudes in the prosperity of the Maltese, that their disposition to passive submission became at length entirely exhausted.

In the year 1425, Alphonso being then King of Arragon and Sicily, and the Islands of Malta and Gozo having been recently mortgaged by that Prince to one Don Gonsalvo Monroi for the sum of thirty thousand golden florins, the people of Malta, no longer able to endure to see themselves thus again disunited from the Crown, sent commissioners to the King; offering, in terms of the most dutiful attachment, to raise among themselves the money requisite for discharging the mortgage and redeeming their country, upon the sole conditions, that their islands should be thenceforward united to the domain of the Crown, and be rendered for ever unalienable from it. Alphonso accepted this noble and affectionate offer, with a becom-

ing sense of the motives that had prompted it, and receiving from the people of Malta the price of their own redemption, complied with all the conditions stipulated: by his act, bearing date at Valentia, the 20th of June, 1428, he annexed the islands of Malta and Gozo, in perpetuity, to his royal domain; he renewed, confirmed, and enlarged the ancient privileges of those islands; and he conferred upon that of Malta the honourable appellation of *Jocale notabile et insigne coronæ regiæ: The most distinguished and valuable jewel of his royal crown.* *

Thus apparently secured, the Maltese continued to administer their own affairs, until the year 1530, when the Emperor Charles V., contrary to the stipulations covenanted between Alphonso and his subjects, made over the said islands of Malta and Gozo to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who had been recently dispos-

* Abela, *Malta Illustrata*, L. II. Not. 13. § 29, 30.

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sessed of that of Rhodes. Upon the arrival of those Knights in Malta, the administration of the government, by those who had a native interest in its concerns, finally ceased; as is plainly imported in the terms of the statement already adduced from Bosio.

It is manifest from that statement (and upon the acknowledgment of the order itself), that an extreme transition was experienced by the Maltese, with respect to the administration of the government of their island, by the introduction of the military authority of the order over them; and it would seem to follow, in natural equity, that the dissolution and termination of that authority would, as its first and immediate consequence, replace that people in the precise condition in which they subsisted on the 29th day of August, 1529, while they still administered the civil government of their country, and were not yet subjected to the military government of the order. And, in point of principle, they undeniably acquire

an equivalent right; but such, and so extensive, are the changes which, in a course of ages, are wrought in the great society of nations, that it is impossible that petty states should escape from being in some degree affected by them; and the paramount right that Great Britain has now acquired over the destiny of Malta, must, of necessity, in many particulars, modify the form of those privileges, to the substance of which the Maltese people can nevertheless justly pretend.

The title that Great Britain has acquired over Malta, stands upon the compound base,—1st, of the right of self-preservation; and, 2dly, upon conquest, legalized and confirmed, by the dissolution of the late Sovereign and *voidance of the Sovereignty* (if I may so express myself), and by the voluntary, and universal suffrage of the people; a people, whose desolate and totally unprotected condition has authorized them to resort to the exercise

cise of the natural right inherent in every society, of seeking for itself an adequate protection under a just government.

Political power can in few instances expose to the public view so sound and well-laid a foundation of right, as this upon which Great Britain is able to maintain her right over Malta.

The right of self-preservation is of such efficacy, that it admits of no resistance or qualification whatsoever. Its pretensions are paramount and absolute. Every state is assumed, by the equity of the law of nations, to lie under a positive incapacity to consent to any act tending to impair the safety of its own political being; and we have seen, by evidence more than ample, that in consequence of the universal revolution which France has produced in the relative proportions of power, the retention of Malta is become essential to the conservation of the political being which Great Britain now maintains in the society of Europe.

Europe. To consent, therefore, to relinquish it, would be to rebel against the law of nature which pronounces it to be morally impossible to act by so self-injurious a rule; and which, moreover, converts that moral impossibility into a perfect ground of right.

Every claim opposed to such a right as this, more especially if the claim be merely nominal and formal, must be over-ruled and quashed by the operative principles of the right in question. Thus, for instance, if France, in her solicitude for the rights of other states, should allege a right on the part of the Crown of Sicily, as adverse to the right here asserted for Great Britain, such adverse allegation would not be effectual to the crafty and insidious purpose for which alone it could be brought forward; because, the Crown of Sicily is incapable of the independent exercise of any such right, much less of maintaining it with safety to Great Britain: it is therefore manifest,

manifest, even to demonstration, that the allegation of such a right could only be intended to operate against Great Britain in favour of France, who holds the Crown of the Sicilies in her own tyrannical power. When we have seen the Neapolitan dominions a prey to France, not only during the late and present wars, but during all the intervening period that was called peace, no principle of justice or right requires us to be so far blinded against the lights of reason and of truth, as not to discern, that whatever might thus be urged for Sicily, respecting Malta, in theory, has its operation, in practice, wholly and exclusively for France; and that, to withdraw our claims, and to desert Malta upon such a plea, would be no less than to acknowledge and sanction the *jus fortioris* of France over the dependencies of the Crown of the Two Sicilies.

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to *a true and positive dissolution* of the body that was invested by Charles V. with the Sovereignty of Malta. Which dissolution, had it regarded a merely honorary institution of knighthood, would not have affected, and certainly would not have provoked the concern, of Great Britain. But, since it regards a body, which, when entire, made pretensions to sovereignty—a sovereignty, whose ancient interests are brought, by the recent vicissitudes of the world, into direct opposition to, and immediate collision with, the *essential* interests of Great Britain; its dissolution cannot any longer be disregarded by her, nor the consideration of it be dismissed, as a thing indifferent to her. The abdication of King James II. was only a political fiction; but the dissolution of the corporate Sovereign of Malta, is a public fact. In order to exist, that body must be *created anew* in all its parts (though its *identity* would then be justly disputable); and the reasons are

many

many and cogent, why, in the present advanced day of Europe, it is highly improbable that Great Britain will consent to be a party in any measure, tending to recal the vanished phantoms of the dark ages; or to embarrass the operations of the political world by the reproduction of machineries, whose principles and powers of action are worn out and exhausted.

In fact, the sovereignty of the order in Malta was a political circumstance of that nature, that although Great Britain would not have disturbed it had it continued to subsist, yet, being ended, she can never consent to recal it into life. Had it survived, she would not have contested its title or possession; on the contrary, she would have manifested a feeling concern for its superannuation, and recalling to her mind the exploits of its youth, would have respected its old age, and have left its decrepid frame to attain the proximate term

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of a natural dissolution. But, since France has stepped forward, and with an assassin's arm beaten out its brains, whatever feelings that fact may excite, it can never inspire a reasonable wish to see it recalled to a life of imbecility and dotage; helpless to itself, an embarrassment to all its neighbours, and serviceable only to the knave who could turn the decay of its faculties to the advancement of his own criminal emolument.

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an equivalent right; but such, and so extensive, are the changes which, in a course of ages, are wrought in the great society of nations, that it is impossible that petty states should escape from being in some degree affected by them; and the paramount right that Great Britain has now acquired over the destiny of Malta, must, of necessity, in many particulars, modify the form of those privileges, to the substance of which the Maltese people can nevertheless justly pretend.

The title that Great Britain has acquired over Malta, stands upon the compound base,—1st, of the right of self-preservation; and, 2dly, upon conquest, legalized and confirmed, by the dissolution of the late Sovereign and *voidance of the Sovereignty* (if I may so express myself), and by the voluntary, and universal suffrage of the people; a people, whose desolate and totally unprotected condition has authorized them to resort to the exercise

cise of the natural right inherent in every society, of seeking for itself an adequate protection under a just government.

Political power can in few instances expose to the public view so sound and well-laid a foundation of right, as this upon which Great Britain is able to maintain her right over Malta.

The right of self-preservation is of such efficacy, that it admits of no resistance or qualification whatsoever. Its pretensions are paramount and absolute. Every state is assumed, by the equity of the law of nations, to lie under a positive incapacity to consent to any act tending to impair the safety of its own political being; and we have seen, by evidence more than ample, that in consequence of the universal revolution which France has produced in the relative proportions of power, the retention of Malta is become essential to the conservation of the political being which Great Britain now maintains in the society of Europe.

Europe. To consent, therefore, to relinquish it, would be to rebel against the law of nature which pronounces it to be morally impossible to act by so self-injurious a rule; and which, moreover, converts that moral impossibility into a perfect ground of right.

Every claim opposed to such a right as this, more especially if the claim be merely nominal and formal, must be over-ruled and quashed by the operative principles of the right in question. Thus, for instance, if France, in her solicitude for the rights of other states, should allege a right on the part of the Crown of Sicily, as adverse to the right here asserted for Great Britain, such adverse allegation would not be effectual to the crafty and insidious purpose for which alone it could be brought forward; because, the Crown of Sicily is incapable of the independent exercise of any such right, much less of maintaining it with safety to Great Britain: it is therefore manifest,

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but — to amputate a portion of *herself*, and to transfer that portion to her ancient enemy and rival; she was required to consign to that rival the most important and valuable fortress of her land, "*the eye of her kingdom, and the bulwark of its empire;*" and to implant into her own soil the representative of a foreign crown, there to remain the perpetual monument of her humiliation. Yet all this was effected, at the imperious instancy of national security; and who is the man that would have justified the minister of that day had he neglected to accomplish it?

Similar humiliation must attend our appropriation of the islands of Minorca, Sardinia, or Sicily. For our insecure (and therefore unavailing,) tenure of the former, we should impose a sacrifice upon the Spanish crown, which, added to that of Gibraltar, has always oppressed its dignity, and angered its friendship.

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In annexing Sardinia or Sicily to the British dominions, we should, in either case, extinguish a kingdom; and thus fill up the measure of degradation and insult, that France has been long heaping upon those persecuted crowns.

But, with respect to Malta, nothing of this nature can result from our determining to retain it, and to confirm our title over it; because, 1st, the sovereign that might have been alleged to suffer humiliation by the transfer of Malta to the British crown, *has ceased to exist;* and because, 2dly, every principle that can produce a title over Malta, unites to establish the *prior title of Great Britain to the dominion of that island.*

That sovereign was the ancient order of Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem; which order, towards the middle of the 16th century, acquired in their *corporate* capacity the *Sovereignty* of Malta, by investiture from the Emperor Charles V., who,

who, by his act of cession, bearing date the 24th of March, 1530, conveyed to "*the Grand Master, Convent, and Religion*" of the order, the islands of Malta and Gozo; constituting them, in their *corporate unity*, the *Seigneur*, or Sovereign, over those islands.

This numerous, and once well-compacted society, had evinced an heroical spirit, and had given signal proofs of its efficiency and power, so long as it retained its primitive energy and vigour; but those active principles began to discover symptoms of exhausture, within a century after the establishment of the body in Malta; and it had lingered in a course of continually increasing decrepitude and decay, when, amidst the recent convulsions of the world, it suddenly attained the period of its dissolution. By that dissolution, that conventual sovereign has lost its entity; there is no longer any such sovereign in existence; and whatever fragments may remain to continue the memorial of the

the *Order of Knights Hospitallers*, the *corporate Sovereign of Malta* is absolutely dissolved and extinguished.

That body was originally compounded of *eight* parts, which were denominated *languages*, or *tongues*, because they severally consisted of individuals belonging to the nations from which their respective parts were designated. Of these eight parts, 1-8th was *English*, 3-8ths *French*, 2-8ths *Spanish*, 1-8th *Italian*, and 1-8th *German*. They possessed considerable estates in their respective countries; the revenues arising from which empowered them, under favour of their peculiar system (of amity with all Christian states, and enmity only with the Mahometan), to maintain, for a long period of time, a considerable degree of dignity, of vigour, and of independence. But at length, about the middle of the 16th century, a breach took place in the integrity of the body, by the cessation of the English part or tongue; in

consequence of which, the body became reduced thenceforward in the proportion of 1-8th. Thus it continued to subsist, until the late commotions of the world that accompanied the Revolution in France, when 3-8th parts were further reduced by the cessation of the French, and 1-8th by that of the Italian tongue. Since then, further changes have been introduced into the constitution of the Spanish tongues, which have so far corrupted and depraved that constituent portion of the body, as to have further dissolved the 2-8th parts of which those tongues consisted; so that of the eight original essential parts of that body, there now only remains 1-8th, or the German part; and thus, the fact of *dissolution* is rendered susceptible of demonstration, no less to the senses than to the understanding. In every point of view in which it can be considered, it is become politically and naturally extinct; nor can all the old and young gentlemen wearing the

cross

cross of the order, however meritorious, who are scattered about Europe, be seriously regarded as composing that sovereign body, nor be viewed in any other light than as its *disjecta membra* or *exuviæ*, its scanty and perished fragments.

The highly important fact and principle here asserted is expressly declared in his Majesty's late Manifesto against France; in which his Majesty affirms, "that the "order of St. John cannot now be consi- "dered as the body to which the island of "Malta was to be restored;" and that "the "fundamental principle upon which the "restitution depended has been defeated, "by the change which had taken place in "the constitution of the order, since the "conclusion of the Treaty of Peace *."

If to these more recent changes, we add all the preceding changes that had taken place in the original composition of the order, we must perceive that they amount

* H. M. Declaration against France, May, 1803.

to *a true and positive dissolution* of the body that was invested by Charles V. with the Sovereignty of Malta. Which dissolution, had it regarded a merely honorary institution of knighthood, would not have affected, and certainly would not have provoked the concern, of Great Britain. But, since it regards a body, which, when entire, made pretensions to sovereignty—a sovereignty, whose ancient interests are brought, by the recent vicissitudes of the world, into direct opposition to, and immediate collision with, the *essential* interests of Great Britain; its dissolution cannot any longer be disregarded by her, nor the consideration of it be dismissed, as a thing indifferent to her. The abdication of King James II. was only a political fiction; but the dissolution of the corporate Sovereign of Malta, is a public fact. In order to exist, that body must be *created anew* in all its parts (though its *identity* would then be justly disputable); and the reasons are many

many and cogent, why, in the present advanced day of Europe, it is highly improbable that Great Britain will consent to be a party in any measure, tending to recal the vanished phantoms of the dark ages; or to embarrass the operations of the political world by the reproduction of machineries, whose principles and powers of action are worn out and exhausted.

In fact, the sovereignty of the order in Malta was a political circumstance of that nature, that although Great Britain would not have disturbed it had it continued to subsist, yet, being ended, she can never consent to recal it into life. Had it survived, she would not have contested its title or possession; on the contrary, she would have manifested a feeling concern for its superannuation, and recalling to her mind the exploits of its youth, would have respected its old age, and have left its decrepid frame to attain the proximate term

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view is more confined, the imagination is prohibited from interposing, and we are constrained to contemplate it with the severity of truth; since its pretensions can appeal to no other tribunal than that, which awards its judgments according to the rigid law of nature and of nations.

Considered with reference to the principles upon which that law is founded, convincing arguments will not fail to suggest themselves, why that sovereignty, being actually dissolved, ought not to be revived. In truth, if we contemplate the body politic of Malta, under the regimen of the order, we shall plainly discern it to have been a *political lusus* or *monstrum;* as much in contradiction with the fundamental principles of civil government, as every *lusus* of nature is in contradiction with her established laws and constitution. On this account it is impossible to apply to the body politic of Malta, under that regimen, any definition of a state, any description of

of a government, any principles regarding the collective rights and duties of a state, that the writers upon natural law have rendered the foundation of their science. The natural relations and proportions, which are supposed, in every sound notion of a state, however diversified, to subsist between the body of the people, and the hands in which the sovereign power is vested, are not to be found in that political system.

It was from not sufficiently attending to this fact that so much incongruous matter was urged, by hasty advocates for the prerogatives of the order, at the conclusion of the late peace. They argued from superficial glances, and visionary assumptions, but never looked the subject steadily in the face. If they had, they could not have failed to have regarded the original sovereignty of the order over Malta, as a memorable and instructive example of the folly of endeavouring to govern in perpetuity

tuity the contingencies of future ages, by the peculiar mood and transient character of one age;—a folly not less in degree and quality, than to attempt to deduce a perpetual effect from a temporary and limited cause. Like the contrivances of some young mechanics, who have imagined that they have discovered the principle of a perpetual motion; but not taking into their calculation the original external impulse which they had given to their machines, and attributing their movements wholly to the supposed inward principle, when the effect of the original impulse has ceased, their machinery has only served to retard a little the cessation of the action, which has presently followed; just so it has proved with the political machine set up in Malta by Charles V. The spirit of heroic action and romantic honour which accompanied the order into Malta, served, like an external impulse, to give to that machine, for some time, a vigorous and exact movement. But

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that movement began to grow imperfect, as soon as that spirit began to waste; and when at length it was entirely exhausted, and the machine left to the operation of its own inward political principles, the sluggish and irregular vacillations which it exhibited, evinced how soon its action must have ceased, had it not been violently broken up by France.

The first and immediate effect of the dissolution of the corporate Sovereignty of the order over Malta, is to give enlargement to a body of valuable rights, which Great Britain is bound, by *the duty of conquest*, to respect and to secure; and which had long been kept out of view, by the forward pretensions of that multitudinous Sovereign. These are the rights of the Maltese people, who constitute a population of about one hundred thousand souls; rights which have already been virtually recognized by Great Britain, in the late peace; in vindication of which it had been

devised,

devised, in restoring the government of the order, to ingraft into that government a portion of the Maltese nation; as the only possible method of providing (under that regimen) something like a representative interest for the Maltese, in the supreme council of foreigners that was again to rule their country.

This measure was, avowedly, founded upon the just pretensions of the Maltese themselves, and upon the obligation of honour binding His Majesty's Crown to afford them protection. In the note addressed by Lord Hawkesbury to the Vice Chancellor of Russia, Count A. Woronzow, his Lordship, by his Majesty's command, expressly adverts to "the attention which "a regard for the honour of his Crown ren-"ders due to the interests and wishes of the "Maltese *." And, in his Lordship's dispatch to the British Ambassador at St. Pe-

* See Papers presented to Parliament, May 27, 1803.

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tersburgh transmitting that note, and dated Jan. 29, 1803, his Majesty's instructions, relative to "the stipulations in favour of the Maltese inhabitants," contain these words:

"It is important that your Excellency "should impress the Russian government "with the conviction of the services ren- "dered by the inhabitants of Malta to his "Majesty and to the common cause, at the "time when the French were in possession "of the island. That for nearly two years "they maintained a state of constant and "active hostility against the French. That "several thousands of them perished in "this state of hostility; and that these "efforts were made at a time when they "could receive assistance from no other "foreign power. That the attachment "evinced by the Maltese to his Majesty "during the blockade, and their loyalty to "him since he has obtained possession of "the island, give them a peculiar claim to "his protection."

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In fact, before Malta was consigned to the order, the Maltese, though subject to the Crown of Sicily, administered the affairs of their own island under a native magistrate, whom they styled *Capitano*. Their privileges had been continually increasing, and acquiring additional strength, through the favour, or, more properly, through the justice and gratitude of their ancient Sovereigns. One memorable circumstance of their history is too directly connected with the present argument to be omitted here. During the agitations of the 14th and 15th centuries, the fluctuting fortunes of the princes who wore the crown of Sicily had constrained them, from time to time, to alienate their island of Malta, upon mortgage, to different nobles

* Bosio, p. III. L. v. p. 89. ap. Abela, *Malta Illustrata*, ed. Ciantar. L. II. Not. 14.

of

of their court; but these alienations occasioned such vicissitudes in the prosperity of the Maltese, that their disposition to passive submission became at length entirely exhausted.

In the year 1425, Alphonso being then King of Arragon and Sicily, and the Islands of Malta and Gozo having been recently mortgaged by that Prince to one Don Gonsalvo Monroi for the sum of thirty thousand golden florins, the people of Malta, no longer able to endure to see themselves thus again disunited from the Crown, sent commissioners to the King; offering, in terms of the most dutiful attachment, to raise among themselves the money requisite for discharging the mortgage and redeeming their country, upon the sole conditions, that their islands should be thenceforward united to the domain of the Crown, and be rendered for ever unalienable from it. Alphonso accepted this noble and affectionate offer, with a becom-

ing sense of the motives that had prompted it, and receiving from the people of Malta the price of their own redemption, complied with all the conditions stipulated: by his act, bearing date at Valentia, the 20th of June, 1428, he annexed the islands of Malta and Gozo, in perpetuity, to his royal domain; he renewed, confirmed, and enlarged the ancient privileges of those islands; and he conferred upon that of Malta the honourable appellation of *Jocale notabile et insigne coronæ regiæ: The most distinguished and valuable jewel of his royal crown.* *

Thus apparently secured, the Maltese continued to administer their own affairs, until the year 1530, when the Emperor Charles V., contrary to the stipulations covenanted between Alphonso and his subjects, made over the said islands of Malta and Gozo to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who had been recently dispos-

* Abela, *Malta Illustrata,* L. II. Not. 13. § 29, 30.

sessed

sessed of that of Rhodes. Upon the arrival of those Knights in Malta, the administration of the government, by those who had a native interest in its concerns, finally ceased; as is plainly imported in the terms of the statement already adduced from Bosio.

It is manifest from that statement (and upon the acknowledgment of the order itself), that an extreme transition was experienced by the Maltese, with respect to the administration of the government of their island, by the introduction of the military authority of the order over them; and it would seem to follow, in natural equity, that the dissolution and termination of that authority would, as its first and immediate consequence, replace that people in the precise condition in which they subsisted on the 29th day of August, 1529, while they still administered the civil government of their country, and were not yet subjected to the military government of the order. And, in point of principle, they undeniably acquire

an equivalent right; but such, and so extensive, are the changes which, in a course of ages, are wrought in the great society of nations, that it is impossible that petty states should escape from being in some degree affected by them; and the paramount right that Great Britain has now acquired over the destiny of Malta, must, of necessity, in many particulars, modify the form of those privileges, to the substance of which the Maltese people can nevertheless justly pretend.

The title that Great Britain has acquired over Malta, stands upon the compound base,—1st, of the right of self-preservation; and, 2dly, upon conquest, legalized and confirmed, by the dissolution of the late Sovereign and *voidance of the Sovereignty* (if I may so express myself), and by the voluntary, and universal suffrage of the people; a people, whose desolate and totally unprotected condition has authorized them to resort to the exercise

cise of the natural right inherent in every society, of seeking for itself an adequate protection under a just government.

Political power can in few instances expose to the public view so sound and well-laid a foundation of right, as this upon which Great Britain is able to maintain her right over Malta.

The right of self-preservation is of such efficacy, that it admits of no resistance or qualification whatsoever. Its pretensions are paramount and absolute. Every state is assumed, by the equity of the law of nations, to lie under a positive incapacity to consent to any act tending to impair the safety of its own political being; and we have seen, by evidence more than ample, that in consequence of the universal revolution which France has produced in the relative proportions of power, the retention of Malta is become essential to the conservation of the political being which Great Britain now maintains in the society of Europe.

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The fact is (and it is infinitely consolatory to the mind, in a question involving the

the interests of a power for whose welfare Great Britain must ever cherish the most lively concern), that the great events which have been brought to pass in the world, within the last fifteen years, have set the ancient pretensions of Sicily to Malta at variance with her own true interests in the disposition of that island; and that, through the radical changes in the relative proportions of power among the continental states, which have followed those events, those antique and barren pretensions are merged in the fruitful and paramount right that has accrued to Great Britain. It is a case that not unfrequently occurs in private life, that a man shall retain a formal pretension to that which is of no profit to him; while he shall possess no positive right to that which will secure and confirm his real interests. Such would be the case of the Crown of Sicily with respect to Malta, were we to allow the validity of her pretensions to exclude Great Britain

Britain from that fortress. To give effect and operation to those pretensions, would be to sacrifice the best interests of that Crown; to seal its fate, and to establish the tyranny of France as strongly in the Mediterranean, as it is rooted in the Continent. This *right of Sicily* would become, in effect, the *power of France;* whereas, the real and manifest interest of Sicily is the confirmation of that title over Malta which Great Britain has acquired, scarcely more for her own security than for that of other states.

The only political advantage which the ancient Sicilian princes appear to have derived from the possession of Malta, was the means of occasionally raising money, in public exigencies, upon mortgage of its territory; until that resource was finally cut off by the generous and loyal conduct of the inhabitants already related. After that, the Emperor Charles V. conceived the idea of rendering it serviceable to his interests,

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by establishing upon it a society possessing a military navy, which might guard and protect his coasts from the insults of his enemies; and accordingly, the only material engagement which he required from the Order of St. John, when he transferred to them the Sovereignty over Malta, was the promise of the protecting influence of their navy. By the dissolution of that Sovereignty, and the title which has attached upon Great Britain, the Crown of Sicily acquires at Malta in the place of that navy, whose cruizes and *caravans* had long since degenerated into mockery and pantomime, the permanent vicinity of the naval power of Great Britain; and it would be an insult to that Crown to enquire, to which of the two it would look with the most confidence for the defence and vindication of its rights.

With regard to the right of *conquest* (in whatever sense that term is here received) that right, as has already been pointed out,

is

is fully confirmed to Great Britain upon two distinct grounds; and, first, by the dissolution and cessation of the Sovereign that heretofore governed Malta.

The proof of *the fact*, I have already exposed before the reader*. But it may perhaps be said, that the dissolution of the Sovereignty of the order, causes the island of Malta to revert immediately to the Crown of Sicily, in virtue of a reversionary clause contained in the original act of cession. In reply to this, I might, in strictness, confine myself to a reference to what has just been argued, shewing, that no pretensions of that Crown can be maintained in prejudice of the title of Great Britain, derived from the imperious necessities of the times; which voids and extinguishes all adverse claims whatsoever. But lest this mode of reply should raise a suspicion that the allegation of the reversionary clause cannot be directly met, I shall di-

* P. 65—68.

rectly

rectly meet that allegation, and shall deny its force.

By the clause in question it was expressly provided, that the order of St. John should not have the power of transferring Malta to any other party; that no title to Malta could possibly be derivable *from them*; but that, if the Order should ever recover possession of Rhodes, or should otherwise remove their residence from Malta, that island and its dependencies should then return to Charles, or to his representatives*. From this clause, therefore, it is manifest, that the Order were incapable of conveying any title to the island; consequently, that the conveyance stipulated in the convention between the Order and Buonaparte in June 1798, was nugatory, and is a mockery in the annals of diplomacy.

But this clause (which, in fact, is the sole reservation of the kind contained in the deed of cession) can only be understood as

* See Vertot, L. IX.

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affecting the circumstances of the Order of St. John; which was thereby incapacitated from alienating those islands. Considered more extensively, and with reference to the principles by which the great society of nations is governed, it cannot be regarded as establishing any rule of inference to bind or circumscribe great states in a distant age, if, amidst the vicissitudes and convulsions of the world, Malta should be forcibly drawn within its political vortex; and be compelled, by the operation of the universal causes in action, to suffer change in its political circumstances. Great as was the power of Charles V. it was nevertheless subject to the laws of possible contingencies, of necessity, and of universal reason. He was not privileged to enter his caveat, in perpetuity, against the operation of those laws. Such a doctrine would be no less offensive to reason, than perpetuities are abhorrent to our law. And therefore, when he deemed it prudent to alienate his

Island

Island of Malta, he must be considered as having done so, subject to the possibility and consequences of those contingencies. It was plain to reason, that if the public events of the world were to subvert the particular arrangement which he had contrived for the sovereignty of Malta, and a violent dissolution were to be brought upon the sovereign, previously to its recovering Rhodes, or choosing for itself another residence, his Crown rendered itself liable, in equity, to the consequences of those occurrences; and that his title to Malta must of necessity follow the rule of the casualties, to which he exposed it, by consenting to place it out of his own power. To suppose the contrary, under circumstances as unparalleled as those which have enlarged the political vortex of Europe to engulph Malta, would be to assume, that human affairs were to be subjected, while time should last, to the will of one man; although subsequent events should demonstrate its injuriousness

and

and improvidence: a position that natural equity will never allow. For it would be equally unjust and absurd, to imagine, that the movements of states, in a crisis where the existence of each was menaced, were to be shackled and obstructed by arbitrary arrangements, not founded upon principles common to human society.

Neither can it be objected, in prejudice of this reasoning, that the Sovereignty of the Order was only a dependent Sovereignty; that Malta was not absolutely alienated from the Crown of Sicily, but remained under feudatory relations with that Crown. Let us look to the substantial truth, and see, whether Malta, under the Order, was not erected by Charles V. into a really independent state, as far as that strange political system can be assimilated to the constitutive notion of a state. By the terms of the act of cession, all the sovereign power was transferred to the Order, who were to hold Malta in perpetuity

tuity (subject solely to the reversionary clause) as it had been held by the Emperor himself; who only reserved a formal acknowledgment of homage, to be made by the annual delivery of a falcon to the Viceroy of Sicily. Now let us hear a good authority speak upon this subject:

"When the homage leaves independency "and sovereign authority, and only means "certain duties to the lord of the fee, or "even a mere honorary acknowledgment, "it does not prevent the state or the feu-"datory prince being *strictly sovereign*. "The King of Naples pays homage for "his kingdom to the Pope, and is never-"theless reckoned among the principal "sovereigns in Europe*."

Such were the express pretensions of the Order in its relations with other states; especially those in which, like England, it

* Vattel. B. I. Ch. 1. § 8.

had

had ceased to possess revenues *; and we are therefore warranted, in considering its authority in Malta to have been "*strictly sovereign.*" In the year 1616, when the cruizers of the Order had seized a vessel belonging to the United Provinces, that state considered the Sovereignty of the Order to be alone responsible for the insult offered. So likewise, in the year 1651, when some vessels of the Order had unjustifiably detained and captured an English merchant ship near Tunis, it was to the Grand Master, Lascaris, as to the only Sovereign bound to make reparation, that the commander in chief of the English squadron, and the English consul, applied for redress of that grievance. The Order, in its capacity of Sovereign, sent ambassadors to all courts; commanded, and dis-

* See a work entitled "Ancient and Modern Malta, &c." by the Chevalier de Boisgelin, vol. i. p. 193. 195.

posed without control of all its forces by sea and land; negotiated treaties; and in every particular exercised as independent a government as any other power. Nor were its measures prescribed by the terms of its tenure, but by its own peculiar and romantic policy, of maintaining perpetual war with the Mahometan states, and perpetual peace with the Christian. But when, at length, the circumstances which had allowed of that policy became suddenly reversed; when the revolution of Europe had driven Malta into the common scene of disorder and change, and had reduced it to an equality with every other disputed or violated territory; and when the spirit of hostility towards the Porte was so absolutely extinguished, that Christendom coalesced with the representative of Mahomet to uphold the common interests of humanity against a common foe, then, the Sovereignty of the Order could no longer

claim

claim a distinctive consideration from that of any other state. No power can possess a right, by singular or whimsical contrivances, to shackle the movements of great states in great struggles, where they are putting forth every effort in support of the common rights of all. This observation applies with peculiar force to the regimen of the Order in Malta, in the portentous and eventful age in which we have been living; and every power is therefore authorized, in such a crisis, to reduce such singular and whimsical contrivances to some plain and intelligible rule, for its own government. Upon this equitable principle we are warranted in regarding Malta, under the declining and impotent government of the Order, and during the late commotions in Europe, as an independent state, whose sovereignty was upon the eve of absolute cessation: consequently, whose people were become justified in preparing themselves for exercising their natural

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tural and indefeasible right, of endeavouring to provide for themselves that efficient protection, which the actual voidance of the Sovereignty would shortly render indispensably necessary, to the preservation of their civil existence.

The final subversion of the government of the Order left the Maltese people without a Sovereign, and a prey to a perfidious, a tyrannical, and a rapacious foe. If ever there was a people really and positively stripped of the natural protection of government, and thrown upon the mercy of great states for the common offices of sovereignty, it was the people of Malta. In this extraordinary crisis, a common interest brought the power of Great Britain to aid in their deliverance. That common interest left the country, eventually, in the hands of the deliverer; and from that moment the Maltese experienced, what they had never before known, but imperfectly in the early annals of their country; a condition of

powerful

powerful protection, combined with general ease, and affectionate encouragement.

But "when a nation has not sufficient "strength of itself, and feels itself unable to "resist its enemies, it may lawfully subject "itself to a more powerful nation*." This right, which, under the existing circumstances, attached in the most perfect manner upon the Maltese, entitled them to pursue the means best calculated to afford themselves a strong protection, and to promote the prosperity and perfection of their native country. And these means they readily recognised in an union with a nation, which, like themselves, were endowed by nature for maritime exertions and trade, and which stood pre-eminent in naval and commercial power. To the Sovereign of that nation, of whose beneficent and parental qualities they were well aware, they sued; and presenting to him the free, ear-

* Vattel, B. I. Ch. 16. §. 193.

nest,

nest, and universal suffrage of their nation, they made to him a tender of their perpetual duty and allegiance, and solicited to be united to the dominions of his crown.

It is of notoriety, how anxious the Maltese were to obtain the accomplishment of their wishes in this particular. On the other hand, how little their suffrages were canvassed or sought for by Great Britain, is rendered equally manifest, by the entire failure of those endeavours, and by the extreme mortification and grief, leading to despair, which they testified on the rejection of their suit; of which, sufficient trace appears in a letter of the Maltese deputies, dated March 1, 1803; and which may be seen among the papers laid before Parliament on the 6th of June of the same year.

It is but just and reasonable to believe, that the pain of the refusal was mutual to both parties; that his Majesty's government,

ment, in resisting the solicitation of the Maltese, was instigated solely by the determination which seems to have governed all its conduct on that difficult occasion; namely, of preserving the honour and integrity of the British name unsullied by the appearance of a disposition, to postpone the peace and welfare of Europe to any object of aggrandizement or glory. The rejection of the suit of the Maltese, is therefore to be regarded as a sacrifice of honour upon the part of Great Britain, for that occasion; but not as any denial of their right to sue for protection, nor as any depreciation of the value of their overture. And therefore, as their suffrages were then waved, only with a view to the adoption of an important experimental measure, and as that experiment has entirely failed in its result, there is now no longer any reason why Great Britain should not proceed to confirm the mutual compact of allegiance and protection; especially,

especially, since we have discovered, that all right lies with Great Britain and the people of Malta; and have ascertained, that there exists no power that can suffer real humiliation from our appropriation of that territory. For it is to be hoped, that we shall hear no more of that impudent imagination of knavish artifice—Buonaparte's *point of honour*.

Such are the grounds of eternal reason, and positive right, upon which Great Britain is able to maintain the absolute priority of her title over every other, to establish her power in Malta. A right, not to be slightly regarded, nor wantonly lost, but to be providently cherished, and actively exercised; and especially, since, besides the negative object (which has hitherto alone been considered), of preventing its lapsing again to France, our occupation of Malta is a circumstance calculated to empower us to control, or determine, the most important political occurrences

rences that can be conceived to arise hereafter in the world, to disturb the peace, or again threaten the safety, of the states of Europe.

I shall not dwell here upon the immense value of Malta to the detail of our naval interests, and to those of our commerce; which value it derives from the relations that it enables us to maintain with the markets of Italy and Greece, and the ports of the Levant, the Black Sea, and the coast of Barbary. I shall pass over this copious and fruitful subject, which would lead me beyond the intended compass of this enquiry. My views in this discourse are chiefly directed towards events, which are capable of affecting what, in better days, was used to be styled the *Republic of Europe*; and amongst these, there are in particular three points of view, under which it especially behoves us to contemplate the effect of our occupation of Malta. To these I shall, very briefly, draw the consideration of the reader.

And

And 1st, That sound and wise policy, founded upon immutable reason and fitness, which now happily prevails, and which enjoins the closest, most intimate, and most cordial union between Great Britain and Russia, requires that the former power should at all times be able to effect an immediate contact with the ports of the Russian Empire, as well in the Black Sea as in the Baltic. The *central* position of the French power in Europe, is the circumstance that renders its force so astonishingly efficient against all other nations of that continent. "France (observed a great statesman), by its mere geographical po-"sition, independently of every other cir-"cumstance, must affect every state of Eu-"rope; some of them immediately, all of "them through mediums not very remote*." To resist that power, which ever acts outwardly, towards the circumference, it is obviously necessary that the great powers

* Burke.

the

of the circumference should act by an united and contrary tendency, to coerce and compress the central enemy. That great external circumference is occupied by the influence of Great Britain and Russia; which powers, (the former from the West, and the latter from the East) by a strong, well-concerted, and well-united junction, and closing of their respective divisions, are able in a manner to surround and confine the internal agent. The junction of England and Russia in the north, cannot be impeded by France; and, in consequence of our possessing Malta, that junction is equally commanded in the south. By means of that extraordinary island, we not only come into a sure contact, but are able also to form a *strong articulation*, with the Russian power, in the point where the enemy is most to be feared; and thus to establish and render perfect a system of compression,

sion, which, if maintained with suitable persistency and vigour, and its force successively communicated to the intermediate states, must in the end exhaust and subdue the central violence.

If we suppose Malta deserted by England, her junction with Russia thereby rendered precarious and ineffectual in the south, and the circumferent resistance weakened in that part where the greatest evil threatens; and which, from being at the greatest distance from the seats of empire of the united powers, requires to be the most constantly and strongly guarded and secured; what will the restless and turbulent enemy not gain, and what will the united powers not lose, by an act of such destructive improvidence on our part? For we have seen, that there is no position throughout the Mediterranean that could replace the services of Malta to Great Britain, nor repair the deficiencies that the relinquishment of it must occasion in the system of defence,

which

which the power, the policy, and the geographical position of France have rendered it indispensable that she should maintain.

But, 2dly, It is the duty of governments to act with universal circumspection; to exercise the most practicable providence; and to carry forward their views, beyond the events and circumstances of the hour, into consequences that shall operate, when those who hold the helm of affairs shall have retired from this sea of agitations; and shall have consigned their posts to those young minds, which are now in preparation to succeed them in the service of their country. Looking forward to interests so dear, and which cannot or ought not to be objects of less concern than our own immediate ease, it will not fail to occur to us, that, among the various vicissitudes of human affairs, it is possible that a future age may witness the fatal occurrence, of a dereliction of the wise and natural policy that we have just considered; and that an

evil

evil and desperate counsel may seduce a cabinet in Russia to fall off from the British alliance, and to unite its views with France, for objects of criminal aggrandizement. This melancholy *possibility* in the prospect, is quite sufficient of itself to determine our present conduct. The prospect indeed is, happily, most remote; it is far beyond the bounds of real existence; and it is only by the power of the fancy, that we can attain to it; but yet, let us ever remember, that a *short and partial experience of the fact* was conceded to us, in order for our conviction and admonition; and that we should therefore stand in lasting condemnation to posterity, if we were, at the present day, to abandon the only security that could preserve us, or those who derive being from us, under that cruel contingency. In the event supposed, what would the crisis of Great Britain chiefly demand? Would it not be, such a position as should enable her to offer every practicable obstruction to the operations of

that sinister and unnatural union? Would it not be, to interpose her naval power between the southern ports of Russia and France; and to possess a strong, nay, if possible, an *impregnable* post, whither she might assemble and accumulate the powerful force which her safety would then call for in the Mediterranean? Such a position, such a post, she now commands by possessing Malta. Let the reader's subtility indicate where that position shall be found, if once we are brought to part with Malta.

In the 3d and last place, there is an event impending in futurity, certainly probable, and, if we are to give credit to France, not remote, which will, in a singular manner, and in an extreme degree, render the powerful presence of Great Britain in the Levant, of the most essential consequence; this event is a breach in the Turkish Empire, and a subversion of its present power. Whenever that great event shall take place,

it

it will be of incalculable importance that we should be present, in force, amidst the scenes of rapine and usurpation that will immediately attend it. It will be indispensably necessary, at such a period, that we should rigorously watch the conduct of France; that we should be able to persecute her with our vigilance, and distract her by our ubiquity; that we should frustrate all her projects of rapacity; and, by the strongest measures that sagacity can devise, or vigour effect, insure her exclusion from Egypt, and so destroy, in the source, all the train of disasters, that must otherwise ensue her acquiring possession of that coveted territory. Here then let me ask the conscience of the reader, how Great Britain shall recover the means of executing these important services, after she shall have consented to be ejected from Malta? It will be no disrespect to his talents, if I take upon myself to affirm, that all the

resources

resources of his geography, his politics, and his ingenuity, will be insufficient to supply those means.

That Egypt is the darling object of Buonaparte's affections; that all his plans, all his policies, all his intrigues and coquetries, all his subterfuges, insults, and menaces, have final respect to that one great object of his anticipation, is questioned by no person of observation and sense, and is evinced by a redundancy of proof. Witness his last declaration to the Divan of Cairo on the day he quitted Egypt*; witness his express avowal to Lord Whitworth, in the only solemn conference he granted to

* "Convinced, as I have often told you before, that "until I can strike a blow that shall put an end to all "my enemies at once, it will be impossible for me to "*enjoy the quiet and peaceable possession of Egypt*, "*that fairest portion of the globe*, I have taken the de- "termination to place myself at the head of my squa- "dron, and to leave the command of the army, during "my absence, to General Kleber."—*Tableau d'Egypte*, tom. i. p. 192, Paris.

that Ambassador*: witness the tendency, and all the circumstances, of Sebastiani's mission to the Levant†: and witness, lastly,

* In that conference, Buonaparte had the assurance to declare, in these express terms of defiance, that, "sooner "or later, *Egypt would belong to France*; either by the "falling to pieces of the Turkish Empire, or by some "arrangement with the Porte."—Papers relative to the Discussion with France, No. 38.

† This emissary was sent into Egypt six months *after* the Peace had been signed at Amiens, upon the errand plainly disclosed by the few following passages. His Report, published at his return in January 1803, inspired Buonaparte with the confidence and audacity with which, in the very next month, he made the declaration to Lord Whitworth cited in the preceding note.

"————At Faoné I visited the Commandant of "the place, the Cadi, and the Cheiks; I received from "the latter, and from all those whom I entertained, *pro-"testations of attachment to the First Consul.*——I "visited at Menouf the Cheik Abdin, whom the First "Consul had appointed Cadi. The other Cheiks of that "town held the same language as those at Faoné. I "said to them, The First Consul *loves your country "much*, he speaks of it often; he interests himself in "your happiness. He has made peace with Europe, and "*this country will feel the interest which he takes*, and "the recollection which he has preserved of the poor "Cheiks of Egypt.——My conversation with the Cheiks "of Cairo turned upon *the interest which the First Con-"sul*

lastly, all the artifices and intrigues of the French consul in Egypt, since the final

" *sul took in Egypt,* on his power, his glory, and on his " esteem and benevolence for the learned Cheiks of Cairo. " Their answers expressed their *attachment to his person.* " He must have been a witness, like myself, to the en- " thusiasm excited at the view of the portrait of the First " Consul, to form an idea of the exaltation of their " sentiments. I have given it to all the principal Cheiks " of Cairo, and of the towns where I have travelled.— " In Egypt, Chiefs, merchants, people, all like to talk " of the First Consul; all offer up prayers for his hap- " piness. All the news which concern him spread from " Alexandria or Damietta, to the Pyramids and the " Grand Cataracts with astonishing rapidity. —— At " Zante I assembled the members of the constituted " authorities and principal persons. After having repre- " sented to them the interest which the First Consul took " in their welfare, I induced them to lay aside the spirit " of party, &c. These few words were received with en- " thusiasm, and all of them exclaimed, " *France for* " *ever! Bonaparte for ever!*' These cries were reite- " rated on my going out, by more than 4000 men. " The Governor and the Russian Commandant were " alarmed at it.

" The Turkish army consists of 16,140 men. It is " useless to add, that this is not to be called an army; " they are men ill armed, without discipline, &c. Six " thousand French would at present be enough *to con-* " *quer Egypt.*"—*Extracts from the Report made to the First Consul by Col. Sebastiani, from the Moniteur of January* 1803.

departure of the British forces from that country.*

Whether the secret wish of his mind be, to attempt a rapid operation for reaching our Indian empire; or whether he is prepared to prosecute that object by a more tardy and lingering process; or whether those views are, for the present, absorbed in the immediate purpose, of reviving the natural fertility of Egypt, and converting its immense dormant resources to the aggrandizement of France; by creating a colonial system, surpassing, in productiveness and security, all that our American islands can aspire to; which ever of these be the governing purpose of his mind, (though it is most reasonable to suppose

* It is a fact of notoriety in the Mediterranean, that the French consul in Egypt has been assiduously and unremittingly engaged, ever since the British army evacuated Egypt, in endeavouring to prepare such a state of things, as shall facilitate the re-entrance of a French force, as soon as his government shall find it expedient to direct a second expedition to that country.

that

that they are all combined in it), we are infinitely concerned in being early prepared to disappoint and frustrate it. And nature has provided no means by which we can possibly accomplish this, but by occupying Malta; which island, with its dependencies, she seems to have formed and prepared to become, in these latter days of general change, violence, and exertion, the representatives of the *Britanniæ Insulæ* within the Mediterranean.

But, in enumerating the *political* powers which we derive from the occupation of Malta, we are not to overlook a most efficacious *moral* power; of which we likewise became possessed, the moment that the genius of Britain, the evil genius of Buonaparte, first took post upon that island. Already has his empire of darkness suffered molestation from the proximity and splendour of truth; the rays of which, diffused from the centre of Malta, have cast their light upon the opposite coasts.

Already

Already the illumination of a free press, discreetly used, and judiciously directed, has begun to dissipate the mists of error and deception which enveloped that wide horizon *. Already the system of falshood and deceit, by which the tyrant governs the minds of his subject nations, has experienced some counteraction from that efficacious engine; and he himself, and his tyranny, stand now fully exposed to the public view of Italy, of Greece, and the Levant.

The power of the press, considered as an engine for moving the public mind, and with it the public energies, had not escaped the subtil attention of Buonaparte himself. By depriving it of all its freedom, and ap-

* For several months past, an Italian paper has been published weekly in Malta, the object of which may be inferred from what is here said. This paper, actively distributed in the Mediterranean by the opportunities which our naval superiority must ever command, is perused with avidity, not only in the islands of Greece, but on the coast of Asia Minor, and at the regencies upon the coast of Africa.

plying

plying all its power to the advancement of his own purposes, he succeeded in giving to the public mind of a large proportion of Europe, a bias towards himself, and against England. He accomplished this, by an active and unremitting dissemination of falsehoods, calculated to exasperate the public passions; and by rigorously closing, at the same time, every passage through which truth might enter, to counteract their operation. The *Moniteur*, and the numerous continental prints under his influence, mediate or immediate, are the notorious channels through which Europe has long been saturated with statements, appeals, declarations, manifestoes, &c. destitute of all foundation in truth; but which, nevertheless, from not being contradicted, became received as true. The reason why they were not contradicted is obvious. The whole of the interior of the continent of Europe, is more or less under the control and chastisement of Buonaparte; and the

greatest

greatest part of its population, through illusion or fear, promote the views of France.

But, while we are deprived of the means of communicating immediately with the interior of Europe, we command an access to all her shores; so that, if we are unable to cause the voice of truth to sound, at once, in the inland countries, it is nevertheless in our power to deliver that voice upon all the coasts; from which it could not fail, by degrees, to make its progress into the interior.

The parts of Europe where the French and German languages principally prevail, are, unfortunately, under the controlling scourge of France; but that extensive range where the Italian language is the common medium of intercourse, I mean, the entire circuit of the Mediterranean Sea, is placed completely within our reach by possessing Malta. At this central, this umbilical point, the genius of truth has now established

blished his oracle: an oracle, more truly divine and terrific than that of Delphi; from whence he can utter his voice to the surrounding nations, and dispense in every direction the rays of that searching light, which Buonaparte labours to shut out from his dark and evil empire, by every contrivance of artifice and force. And shall we now extinguish that salutary light, merely because Buonaparte

"———— tells us, how he hates its beams!"

By persisting in a course of systematic, active, and public detection of all his purposes and dealings, and by a similar exposure of the powers, principles, and exalted qualities of our own great country, there is no question that the sentiments and energy, which have so long been lulled and suspended in those nations, must finally break forth, and be roused into wakefulness and action; and at length excite such a fermentation in the general

mass,

mass, as shall eminently contribute in unrooting the tyranny which he has established.

Since, then, Great Britain's pretensions to retain Malta are so solid, and the possession of Malta so efficacious, what can remain, but,—calling to our recollection the example of our fathers in the instance of Gibraltar,—to pronounce, That the policy and interest of Great Britain (duly considered and appreciated) peremptorily demand for her the retention of Malta, and the annexation in perpetuity of that territory and its dependencies to the British dominions:—That it behoves us, uniting in one view our empires of the West and East, to regard our intermediate rock of Malta as our passage of Thermopylæ; and to contest its occupation with a tenaciousness not less resolute and glorious, than that which has rendered that pass an object of everlasting veneration.

In doing however this act of justice to our-

ourselves, we shall have an act of justice to perform likewise towards the remnant of the Order of St. John. Of this the government was equitably aware upon a former occasion, when it had proposed to annex Malta to the British Crown, in the following article:

"Malta to remain in perpetuity in the "possession of his Majesty. The Knights "of the Order of St. John to be indemnified "by his Majesty for any losses of property "which they may sustain in consequence "of such an arrangement*."

There are, doubtless, articles which may be justly regarded as property belonging to the surviving representatives of that order. At the same time, we must be upon our guard, in distinguishing the articles that may be rightfully claimed as such. Whatever sums, for example, have been applied

* Papers relative to the discussion with France, No. 50, *incl.* 2.

to

to the necessary services and security of the state, cannot be recovered under that description. Public works, docks, fortifications, ordnance, &c. cannot be allowed to pass under the head of property belonging to the order; because it had engaged itself, in its sovereign capacity, to afford strength and protection to the island and its inhabitants; so that whatever, during a course of nearly three centuries, may have been expended for such purposes, ought to be now regarded as the property of the soil, and amply earned by the public of Malta, in return for those centuries of unintermitting subserviency and dependance. It might, nevertheless, in every point of view, well become the generous and upright policy of England, in confirming her own title over Malta, to contribute munificently (and beyond the strict pretensions of the order to indemnification) in some liberal arrangement, for enabling that body to preserve a memorial of its ancient glo-

ries,

ries, and maintain the distinction of its honours among the other chivalrous institutions which still survive. And this object might, perhaps, be best attained, by the purchase of estates, in some part of the Continent, and within the territories of the Sovereign who shall testify the greatest interest for preserving the honours of the order; the revenues arising from which, might produce an income sufficiently ample to empower the remnant of that order, and its chief, to sustain a conspicuous and honourable distinction in the view of Europe.

But there still remains another question for the consideration of our national justice and honour—a question of very grave and serious importance: How are we to retain Malta, and by what principles are we to rule it? Certainly not like some new island in the Charibean Sea, or Western Ocean; to be colonized by Englishmen, and worked by slaves. We have discovered

discovered no new island, neither have we extended the limits of our colonial system. In annexing Malta to the British dominions, we adopt a portion of the ancient world; we receive among our numbers, and incorporate into our empire, an ancient race; a people, who reverence religion and law, and who value legitimate freedom and civil enjoyment; a people, who possess a strong national character, many excellent natural capacities, traditional partialities and disgusts, ancient and acknowledged privileges, activity and courage, loyalty and honour; and in whom all these qualities will acquire increased force, as soon as their feelings shall have recovered from the torpor caused by the incumbent pressure of the knights' government; and as soon as they shall have derived some degree of elation and confidence, from participating in the common strength and dignity of the British Empire.

Admonished

Admonished by the remembrance of Corsica, we shall not attempt to remould the Maltese upon the form of the British constitution; but, following the duty prescribed by our relation towards them, we shall secure to them the perpetuity of those native usages, which long local experience, and hereditary partialities, prescribe for their own government.

"The sole right of the conqueror is de-
"rived from justifiable self-defence. If
"the conqueror thinks proper to retain the
"sovereignty of the conquered country,
"and has a right to retain it, the same
"principles must also determine the man-
"ner in which he is to treat that state:—
"On the submission of the people, he is
"bound *to govern them according to the*
"*laws of the state**."

If such would have been the incontestible right of the Maltese had they been

* Vattel, B. III. Ch. 13. §. 201.

conquered

conquered in arms against Great Britain, how much more justly is it so, when they themselves were confederate parties with her in the conquest, which expelled the common enemy, and placed their country in her power? The common interest that now unites England and Malta, calls for the constant presence of a representative of the British Crown in that Island; on the one hand, to secure the interests of that Crown in Malta; and on the other, to afford to the people a perpetual evidence, and prompt experience, of the royal protection. But all that this common interest demands, in civil matters, is the presence of his Majesty's civil representative, and of the few individuals immediately requisite to give effect to the duties of his office. In every other particular, the ancient civil establishment of the island is complete in the hands of its native inhabitants: thereby happily precluding the introduction of the most pernicious

nicious evil that could possibly creep in, to undermine and destroy our credit and security in the possession of this valuable dependency—a jobbing system, for the increase of patronage at home.

If we cultivate the confidence and regard of our adopted brethren in Malta; if we aid them in their endeavours to attain all the advantages which nature holds out to them, in the geographical position and circumstances of their island; if we impart to them the succours of our knowledge, experience, and resources, to promote their national prosperity; no human power can shake the footing we shall establish in Malta. The love towards their little country which the Maltese nation entertain, is one of the most remarkable, certainly one of the most estimable, points in their national character. "Ulysses (says Seneca) returned "with as much impatience to his native rock "of Ithaca, as Agamemnon to his sump- "tuous palaces at Mycenæ; for no one loves

" his country by reference to its greatness,
" but because it is his country."—" Ulysses
" ad Ithacæ suæ saxa sic properat, quemad-
" modum Agamemnon ad Mycenarum no-
" biles muros. Nemo enim patriam, quia
" magna est, amat, sed quia sua." And such, it is well known, is the passion and attachment of the Maltese to their native rock; which plainly evinces, how secure a post that island must prove to a power, that shall afford to its inhabitants the protection and succour requisite for perfecting its prosperity. The weight of military authority, which had depressed them in the latter ages of the order, was so painful to their recollection, that even after his Majesty's government was established in the island, in the person of the commander of his forces, the people of Malta did not consider themselves as having yet attained the object, to which they so anxiously looked under his Majesty's protection. A *civil* chief was essential to the regimen which

which their ancestors had ever enjoyed, and to the return of which all their prospects were directed; and it was not until their wishes and solicitations were indulged in that particular, by the appointment of a chief magistrate unconnected with the military, that they regarded themselves as restored to the free enjoyment of their native country. And certainly, if any thing could have given consummation to the happiness of the people of Malta in that settlement of their island, it was the personal character and qualifications of those whom his Majesty was pleased to make choice of, successively, to represent his paternal beneficence among them *; and whose just, encouraging, mild, and yet efficient adminis-

* Charles Cameron, Esq. his Majesty's present Governor of the Bahama Islands.

Sir Alexander Ball, Bart. his Majesty's present Commissioner for administering the Civil Government of Malta.

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trations, have lastingly endeared them to that nation; and, contrasted with the carriage and deportment of the noble foreigners * who had so long occupied their

* It has been, in latter times, a conceit of the Knights, that they were entitled to regard themselves, individually, as *Sovereigns*, in consequence of the sovereignty conferred upon their order. M. de Boisgelin, in the dedication to his late ponderous panegyric on the government of the Knights, brings into one sentence, " His Majesty " and the Emperor of Russia, and the less fortunate " *Sovereigns* who have been deprived of their dominions." It is very easy to imagine, what must have been the consequence, to the *native society* of Malta, of some hundreds of *foreign noblemen* impressed with that conceit, assembled upon that narrow rock. But if M. de Boisgelin had adverted to the express terms of the original act of donation, published in his 3d volume, he would have distinctly read that they were *not Sovereigns;* so far from it, that it required all their collective multitude, subsisting in its primitive *integrity*, to constitute *one Sovereign*. The following are the words of the original act, by which Charles transferred the allegiance of his Maltese subjects to the order, and defined that order as his *successor* :—" Mandantes eadem auctoritate nostra, uni- " versis et singulis hominibus, masculis et fœminis, &c. " in dictis insulis, &c. *dictum Magnum Magistrum, Con-* " *ventumque, et Religionem* Sancti Joannis Hierosolomi- " tani, pro eorum DOMINO utili et pheudali, ac VERO " POSSESSORE prædictorum habeant et reputent, suisque " mandatis

their island, have occasioned a change in the circumstances of their society, exceeding, if possible, that which formerly took place, when they were transferred by the Crown of Sicily to the Order of St. John.

Such are the people whom we are to add to our numbers, in uniting their island to our own. They are qualified to afford us important services; let us requite those services, not only with justice but generosity, not only with exactness but affection; and let us not, by any discovery of a deceitful or selfish policy, disgust or alienate their opinion. Let us carefully cherish, and kindly encourage, this busy and industrious swarm. Under the order, they languished into drones; let us revive their powers, and recall them into active and useful

" mandatis pareant et obediant, &c." (M. de Boisgelin's Ancient and Modern Malta, vol. iii. p. 200. Append. No. 5.) This renders it incontrovertible, that the quality of *Sovereign* attached upon no one individual amongst them, but only upon the united body of the order, in its plenitude and integrity.

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life; but above all things let us take care, that we do not, by unjust, cruel, or dishonourable neglect, exasperate them into hornets; thus losing their honey and their labour, while we add pungency and poison to their stings.

It only now remains for me, in concluding, to acquaint the reader, why the foregoing observations have been brought forward at this particular moment.

The letter, proffering peace, which Buonaparte insidiously addressed to his Majesty just before the opening of the present session of Parliament, was transmitted from Paris at the very time that he had there renewed the mention of MALTA, as the cause of the war, and, consequently, as the point upon which the question of peace must ultimately turn. At such a moment, therefore, it appeared to be, not only very seasonable, but of the very first importance, that the public attention and recollection should be early awakened to the subject of Malta; and

that

that the public mind should be solemnly called upon to reflect, that the question of Malta is no petty question, for party feuds and broils; that it is a lofty question, of the highest national concernment imaginable, rising far above the billows and storms of party into the clear and serene ether of truth, in which we each are bound to survey and to contemplate it.

At the close of last December, a paper, entitled an "Exposition of the State of the French Empire," was communicated, by the order of Buonaparte, to the Legislative Body at Paris; which "Exposition" was concluded by the following notable sentence: "When England shall be con-
"vinced, that France will *never accept any*
"*other conditions than those of Amiens*, and
"will never consent to leave her the right
"of breaking treaties at her pleasure, *by*
"*appropriating* MALTA—England will then
"have arrived at pacific sentiments *." In

* The *Moniteur* of Jan. 1, 1805.

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this paragraph, Buonaparte takes upon himself to fix the rule of evidence of a disposition for peace on the part of His Majesty, to be, his Majesty consenting to relinquish Malta; and (notwithstanding the enormous increase of the power and influence of France since the peace) to take up with the terms of the treaty of Amiens, as a full security against the evils which have compelled his Majesty to resort again to arms.

But, in order to understand thoroughly Buonaparte's meaning in thus restricting us to the terms of that treaty respecting Malta, we must look back to the solemn explanation of that meaning, communicated by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs to Lord Whitworth, in April 1803; when he acquainted that Ambassador — "that no consideration on "earth would induce Buonaparte to con- "sent to a concession in perpetuity of "Malta, in any shape whatever; and that "the

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But, unless we are disposed to concede to Buonaparte his maxim, *pro jure voluntas*, *our* determination and *our* will are as good as *his*; and we may please to declare, with equal decision, though with far more right, what he declared upon his first obtaining possession of Malta—"*It shall cost dear to those who shall dislodge us**."

We have plainly seen, in the short retrospect of our Mediterranean history contained in the first pages of this tract, that the great principle which Buonaparte declares to be the object of his inflexible hostility, is an essential and *vital* principle of our national policy; and, in the subsequent pages, we have discovered enough to convince us, that we cannot collude with him in resisting the operation of that prin-

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From what has come under our consideration, it must be evident to us, that we are not to view our occupation of Malta as an insulated or ordinary accident of war; it is the result of a chain of events, giving origin to a line of policy, which, during the flow of a century, has been gradually imposing itself upon Great Britain, in consequence of the progress of events taking place upon the continent of Europe; which, at the beginning of the last century, brought her power to the entrance of the Mediterranean Sea; which directed her, in the subsequent interval, to occupy occasionally an intermediate station between the ports of Spain and France; and which, at length, in the present eventful maturity of violence and aggression, has enjoined and enabled her to acquire a strong and permanent establishment farther to the east in that sea, in order to fix a bound to

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But let us recall to our memory those words of wisdom: "A great state is too "much envied, too much dreaded, to "find safety in humiliation. To be secure, "it must be respected. Power, and emi- "nence, and consideration, are things not "to be begged, they must be commanded; "and they who supplicate for mercy from "others, can never hope for justice through "themselves. What justice they are to

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Under all these circumstances, we shall do well to tell ourselves continually, that peace is not, at present, in the world. This is a great truth, which we must practise our minds to contemplate with composure and hardihood. To be insensible to it, would betray some radical debility in the moral powers. Until we have learned to survey it with submissive assent on the part of our reason, and to receive it as the governing object of our conduct, it is impossible that we should be equal to the circum-

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the usurpation and aggrandizement of France upon that side. And, indeed, so extraordinarily coincidental have been the events that could alone have placed Malta in circumstances to be acquired by Great Britain; so ample is the title by which Great Britain is now warranted to retain that acquisition; and so essential is her retention of it for checking the torrent of French usurpation in its progress eastward; that we can ascribe to Providence alone, who superintends and ultimately controls the agencies permitted in the world, the conduct and direction of the contingencies, that have placed such a power, at such a post, in such a crisis of human affairs.

And what is here observed, of the progressive policy which has rendered Great Britain a Mediterranean power, is to be applied equally to Russia. The same general causes have, in the course of the last century, advanced the Russian power

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The question, then, is—not whether Great Britain shall, or shall not, possess a certain "*miserable rock,*" called *Malta;* but —whether France shall be left in the unrestrained liberty of overturning the world,

life; but above all things let us take care, that we do not, by unjust, cruel, or dishonourable neglect, exasperate them into hornets; thus losing their honey and their labour, while we add pungency and poison to their stings.

It only now remains for me, in concluding, to acquaint the reader, why the foregoing observations have been brought forward at this particular moment.

The letter, proffering peace, which Buonaparte insidiously addressed to his Majesty just before the opening of the present session of Parliament, was transmitted from Paris at the very time that he had there renewed the mention of MALTA, as the cause of the war, and, consequently, as the point upon which the question of peace must ultimately turn. At such a moment, therefore, it appeared to be, not only very seasonable, but of the very first importance, that the public attention and recollection should be early awakened to the subject of Malta; and

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that the public mind should be solemnly called upon to reflect, that the question of Malta is no petty question, for party feuds and broils; that it is a lofty question, of the highest national concernment imaginable, rising far above the billows and storms of party into the clear and serene ether of truth, in which we each are bound to survey and to contemplate it.

At the close of last December, a paper, entitled an "Exposition of the State of the French Empire," was communicated, by the order of Buonaparte, to the Legislative Body at Paris; which "Exposition" was concluded by the following notable sentence: "When England shall be con-"vinced, that France will *never accept any* "*other conditions than those of Amiens*, and "will never consent to leave her the right "of breaking treaties at her pleasure, *by* "*appropriating* MALTA—England will then "have arrived at pacific sentiments *." In

* The *Moniteur* of Jan. 1, 1805.

this

this paragraph, Buonaparte takes upon himself to fix the rule of evidence of a disposition for peace on the part of His Majesty, to be, his Majesty consenting to relinquish Malta; and (notwithstanding the enormous increase of the power and influence of France since the peace) to take up with the terms of the treaty of Amiens, as a full security against the evils which have compelled his Majesty to resort again to arms.

But, in order to understand thoroughly Buonaparte's meaning in thus restricting us to the terms of that treaty respecting Malta, we must look back to the solemn explanation of that meaning, communicated by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs to Lord Whitworth, in April 1803; when he acquainted that Ambassador — "that no consideration on "earth would induce Buonaparte to con- "sent to a concession in perpetuity of "Malta, in any shape whatever; and that "the

" the re-establishment of the order was *not* " *so much* the point to be discussed, as *that* " *of suffering Great Britain to acquire* A " POSSESSION WITHIN THE MEDITER- " RANEAN *."

By this explicit declaration, our eyes are opened at once to see into the depth of the question. The real object of his policy is most clearly exposed before us. We are frankly and distinctly acquainted, that the alleged point of honour respecting the Treaty of Amiens was but a feint, and never any thing more than an ostensible reason for insisting upon the terms of the tenth article of that treaty; that the true and substantial reason why Buonaparte adhered so tenaciously to those terms was, —not any delicacy about the interests of the order, or the success of that article, but— a dread of the establishment of the British power in the Mediterranean; and an entire conviction, that if he could only effect

* Papers relative to the Discussion with France, No. 61.

the

the dislodgment of that power from Malta, its authority in the Mediterranean would not be very durable, nor very alarming to him.

But, unless we are disposed to concede to Buonaparte his maxim, *pro jure voluntas*, *our* determination and *our* will are as good as *his*; and we may please to declare, with equal decision, though with far more right, what he declared upon his first obtaining possession of Malta—"*It shall cost dear to those who shall dislodge us**."

We have plainly seen, in the short retrospect of our Mediterranean history contained in the first pages of this tract, that the great principle which Buonaparte declares to be the object of his inflexible hostility, is an essential and *vital* principle of our national policy; and, in the subsequent pages, we have discovered enough to convince us, that we cannot collude with him in resisting the operation of that prin-

* See page 23.

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ciple, without committing an act of parricide upon our country.

From what has come under our consideration, it must be evident to us, that we are not to view our occupation of Malta as an insulated or ordinary accident of war; it is the result of a chain of events, giving origin to a line of policy, which, during the flow of a century, has been gradually imposing itself upon Great Britain, in consequence of the progress of events taking place upon the continent of Europe; which, at the beginning of the last century, brought her power to the entrance of the Mediterranean Sea; which directed her, in the subsequent interval, to occupy occasionally an intermediate station between the ports of Spain and France; and which, at length, in the present eventful maturity of violence and aggression, has enjoined and enabled her to acquire a strong and permanent establishment farther to the east in that sea, in order to fix a bound to

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stances and demands of the crisis, in which Heaven is pleased to place us. We must now wait the season of its occurrence; and pursue it by the only course that can possibly conduct to it. *Pax quæritur bello*, is an illustrious and propitious maxim; and although Cromwell assumed it for his commonwealth, it is not the less worthy the adoption of this United Kingdom. Let us not be deceived on this head; the peace we can *make*, will be a thousand fold worth the peace we shall *receive*; and there exists no other instrument for *making peace*, but war. The diplomatic parchment makes no peace; it only records that which the sword has made. Unless, therefore, we first make peace with the sword, we must be content to receive it, in negotiation, from him who has made it; and in the proportion and quality which his secret policy, and final purpose, will allow. If his secret policy is implacably hostile, if his final purpose is to produce decay in the vitals

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of his adversary, it is not difficult to fore-judge the value of the peace which he will consent to grant. Buonaparte, though himself dilated into empire since the date of the treaty of Amiens, though dissolving states and creating kingdoms, proclaims to Europe, at the very moment that he affects to proffer peace to his Majesty, that his Majesty shall have no other choice, but to contract his pretensions within the now futile and nugatory terms of that treaty, or to be exposed to the interminable vengeance of the French power. And what is this, but, in the most offensive form of outrage that sanguine insolence could have invented, to signify, directly and personally, to his Majesty, that he never shall have peace? But what is the consequence? That consequence must depend altogether upon the fact, whether this outrage inspires us with indignation or fear. If the latter, we accept whatever he may be pleased to concede, and we add Britain

to the list of his vassal nations. If the former, we make an effort proportioned to the end we aim at, and to the spirit by which we are moved.

All our former wars with France were but skirmishes, and flourishes of skill, compared with that in which we have been now engaged upwards of twelve years, with the sole exception of the interval of truce that followed the parley at Amiens; in the present conflict, things are become serious; our antagonist is calling together all his resources of strength and art, to strike into our vitals, and to lay us at his feet. And in such a combat, while we are engaged in guarding our vital parts, and in endeavouring to retaliate upon our enemy the weight of his own hostility, it is manifest that we must expect to receive some hard and sharp blows; and that we must bear them, as we inculcate the same upon our children. If we can preserve our vitals from assault, and can throw in our force effectually

effectually where the enemy is weak and vulnerable, the scars and bruises we may receive ought only to exasperate our courage, and to add fresh vigour to our exertions. In such a position, we shall do well to give attention to another monitory counsel of the same great oracular authority just referred to: "That state which is resolved "to hazard its existence, rather than to "abandon its object, must have an in- "finite advantage over that, which is re- "solved to yield rather than carry its re- "sistance beyond a certain point. Hu- "manly speaking, that people which "bounds its efforts only with its being, "must give the law to that nation which "will not push its opposition beyond *its* "*convenience.*"

If we are to fall in the contest, we may as well fall holding Malta as relinquishing it; but if it should please Almighty God, that the storm may eventually pass by and subside, leaving Malta in our possession,

possession, the violence of France, and the peace of Europe, will thenceforward be consigned to the control and custody of Great Britain. And there are some bright points and tints discernible upon our political horizon, at the present moment, to animate our hopes, and incite our resolutions to perseverance and increased effort, in final expectation of that great result; more especially, since it has been formally and unequivocally notified to us, on the part of the enemy, that there remains for us no other prospect whatever, out of war, excepting *a second peace of Amiens*: that is to say, such a peace as the government once made, avowedly and conscientiously, upon experiment, and for the failure of which, it was early and providently prepared.

To make that experiment once, and to evince to Europe a readiness to encounter large sacrifices for the restoration of general tranquillity, was an homage to wis-

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dom and to peace; to repeat the experiment after that failure, and under circumstances essentially similar, would be an outrage to both. "Ego itaque pacis, ut "ita dicam, alumnus, pacis semper auctor, "semper laudator, pacem cum NAPO- "LEONE* nolo. — Cur autem nolo? quia "turpis est, quia periculosa, quia esse non "potest.

"Nec ego pacem nolo, sed *pacis nomine* "*bellum involutum* reformido. Quare si "pace frui volumus, bellum gerendum "est; si bellum omittemus, pace nun- "quam fruemur. Est autem vestri con- "silii, Patres Conscripti, in posterum *quam* "*longissime* providere. Idcirco in hac "custodia, et tanquam in specula, col- "locati estis, ut vacuum omni metu po- "pulum *Anglicanum* vestra vigilia et pros- "picientia redderetis. Turpe est summo "concilio orbis terræ, præsertim in *re tam* "*perspicua*, consilium intelligendi defuisse.

* M. Antonio.

"Nolite

"Nolite igitur id velle, quod fieri non "potest; et CAVETE, per deos immor- "tales! Patres Conscripti, NE SPE PRÆ- "SENTIS PACIS PERPETUAM PACEM "AMITTATIS!"

CICERO, *Philipp.* vii. 8, 9, 19, 25.

FINIS.

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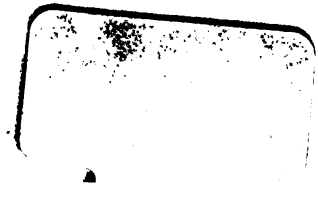

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"Nec ego pacem nolo, sed *pacis nomine* "*bellum involutum* reformido. Quare si "pace frui volumus, bellum gerendum "est; si bellum omittemus, pace nun- "quam fruemur. Est autem vestri con- "silii, Patres Conscripti, in posterum *quam* "*longissime* providere. Idcirco in hac "custodia, et tanquam in specula, col- "locati estis, ut vacuum omni metu po- "pulum *Anglicanum* vestra vigilia et pros- "picientia redderetis. Turpe est summo "concilio orbis terræ, præsertim in *re tam* "*perspicua*, consilium intelligendi defuisse.

* M. Antonio.

"Nolite

"Nolite igitur id velle, quod fieri non "potest; et CAVETE, per deos immor- "tales! Patres Conscripti, NE SPE PRÆ- "SENTIS PACIS PERPETUAM PACEM "AMITTATIS!"

CICERO, *Philipp.* vii. 8, 9, 19, 25.

FINIS.

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possession, the violence of France, and the peace of Europe, will thenceforward be consigned to the control and custody of Great Britain. And there are some bright points and tints discernible upon our political horizon, at the present moment, to animate our hopes, and incite our resolutions to perseverance and increased effort, in final expectation of that great result; more especially, since it has been formally and unequivocally notified to us, on the part of the enemy, that there remains for us no other prospect whatever, out of war, excepting *a second peace of Amiens*: that is to say, such a peace as the government once made, avowedly and conscientiously, upon experiment, and for the failure of which, it was early and providently prepared.

To make that experiment once, and to evince to Europe a readiness to encounter large sacrifices for the restoration of general tranquillity, was an homage to wis-

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dom and to peace; to repeat the experiment after that failure, and under circumstances essentially similar, would be an outrage to both. "Ego itaque pacis, ut "ita dicam, alumnus, pacis semper auctor, "semper laudator, pacem cum NAPO-"LEONE* nolo. — Cur autem nolo? quia "turpis est, quia periculosa, quia esse non "potest.

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